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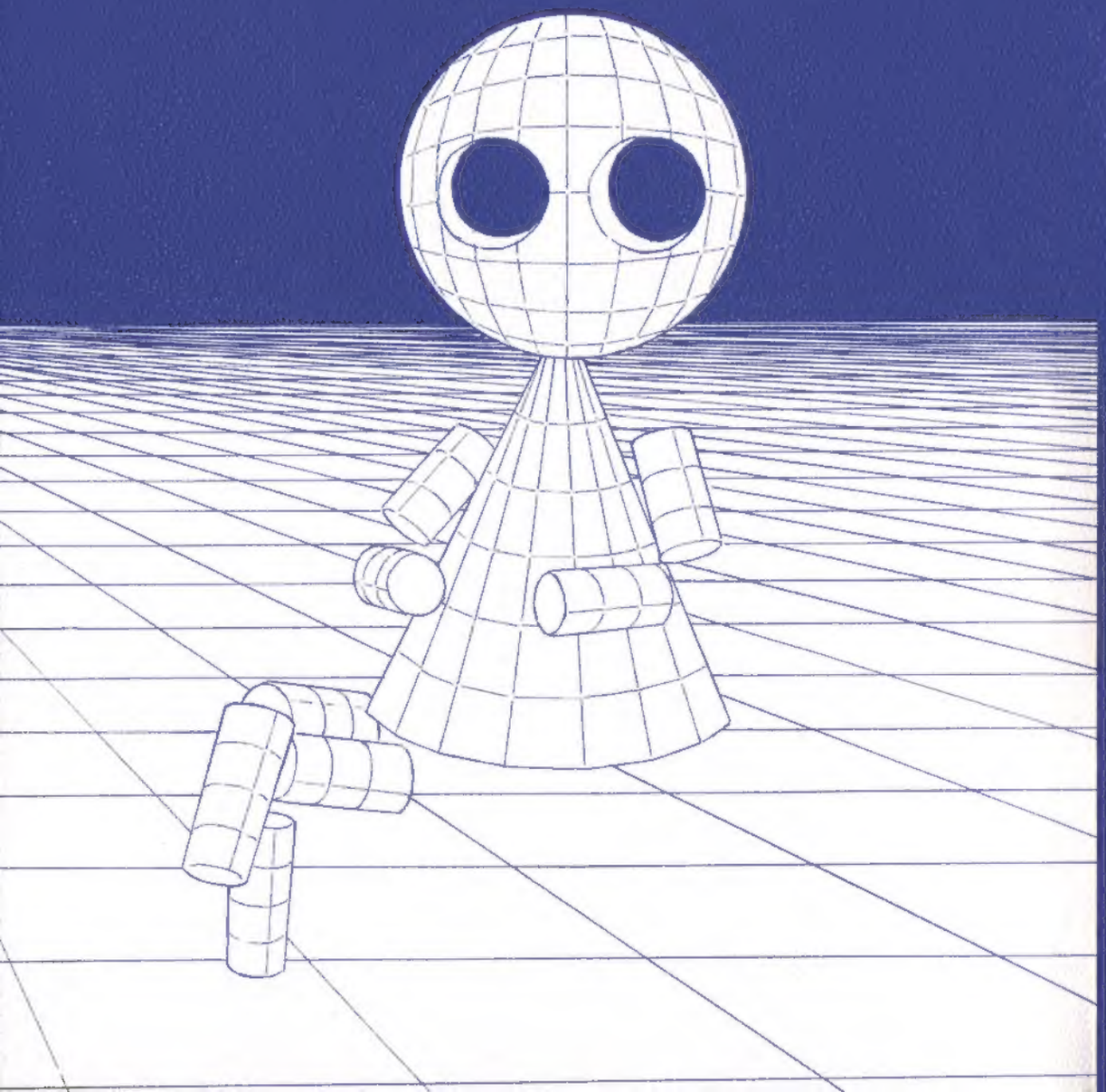

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2 花沢健吾

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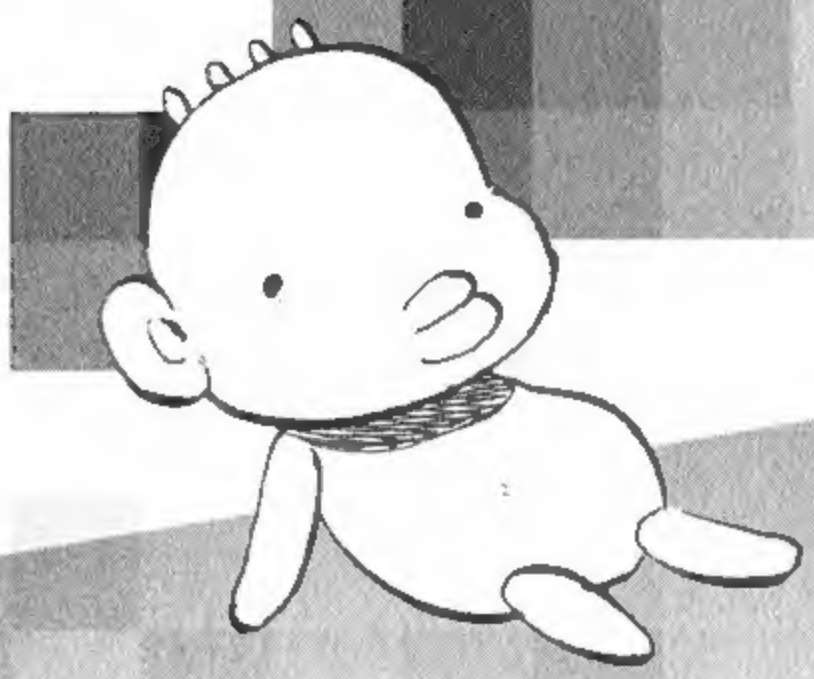
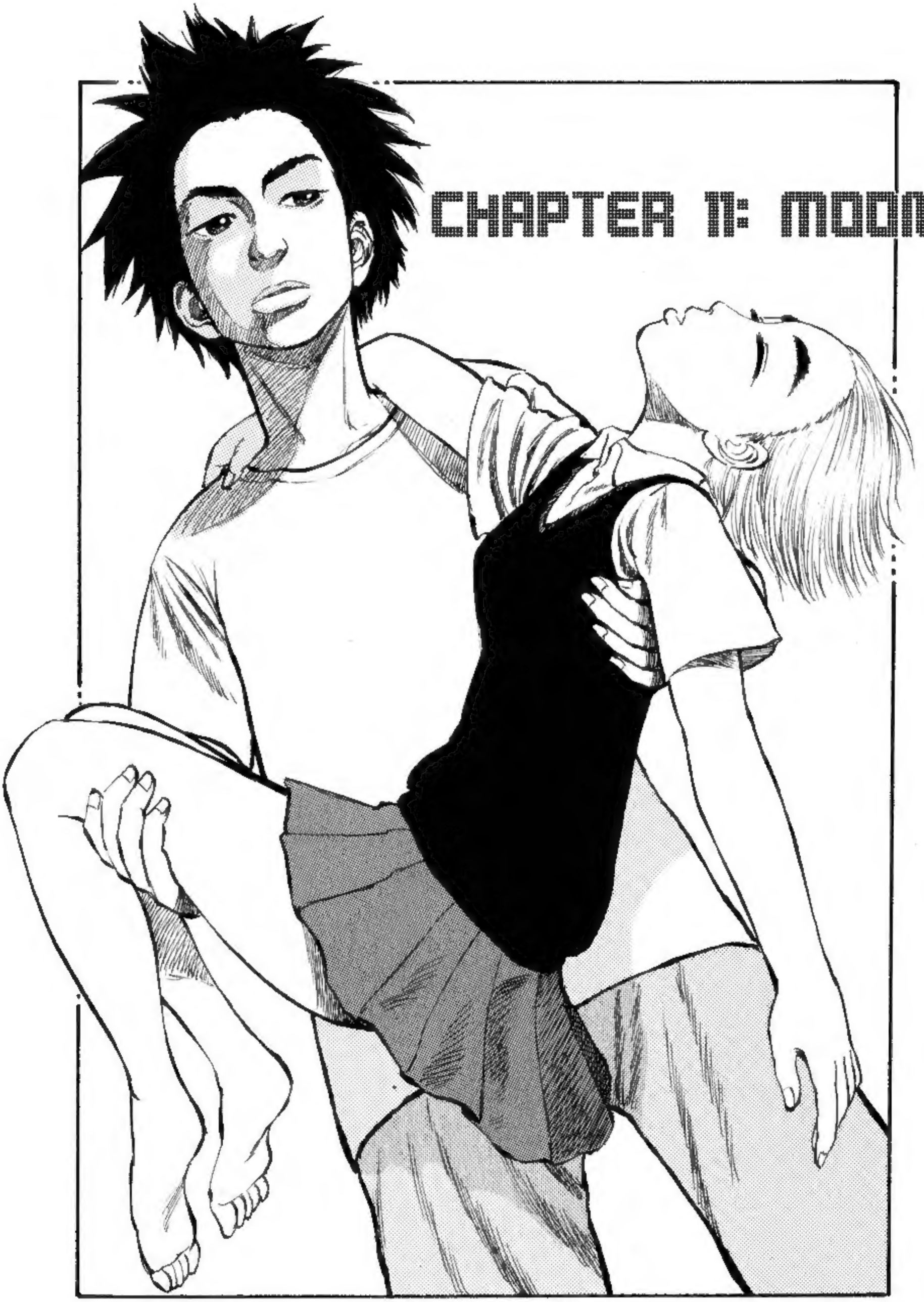


CHAPTER 11: MOON



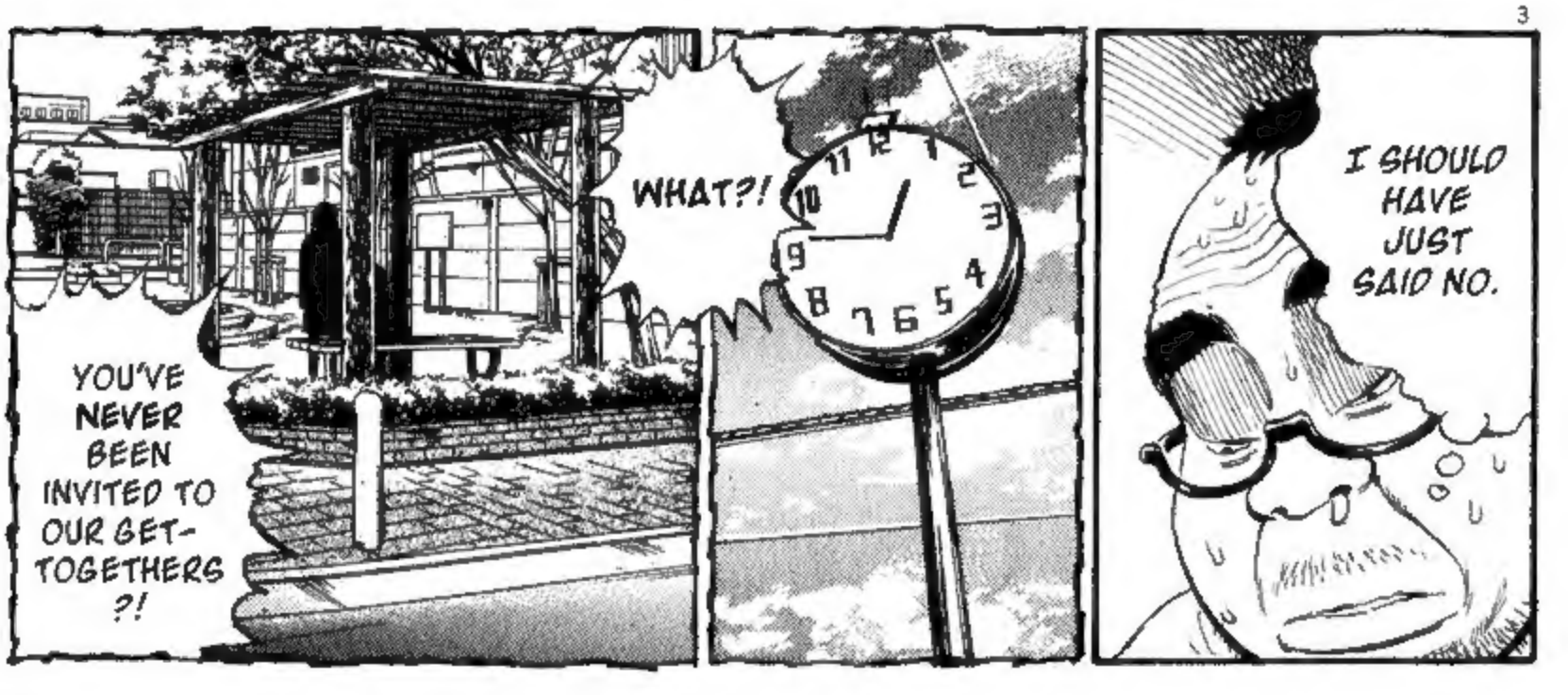
BOTTOMS UP!!

What...
Depression
The Beer

Here...?
Am I doing...

Aside from me, they're all in the office.
SO I SAYS ...
Another gathering of Uoto Printing hires from the same period, now shrunk down to six.

The one person who actually invited me...
...Looks really pissed off.


YOU'VE NEVER BEEN INVITED TO OUR GET-TOGETHERS ?!
WHAT?!
I SHOULD HAVE JUST SAID NO.

W-WHY IS SHE YELLING AT ME?

N-NONE.

YOU MEAN YOU HAD NO IDEA THIS WHOLE TIME?

WHAT THE HELL IS THE MEANING OF THIS?

I... DON'T KNOW.

WHAT?!

WHY?!

WELL, THERE'S ONE TODAY, AND YOU'RE COMING!

THAT CHICKENSHIT, AOYAMA! HE'S BEEN LYING TO ME!

I-I DON'T SEE WHAT I'D DO THERE...

WHY NOW?

THE STUPID TWAT!

4

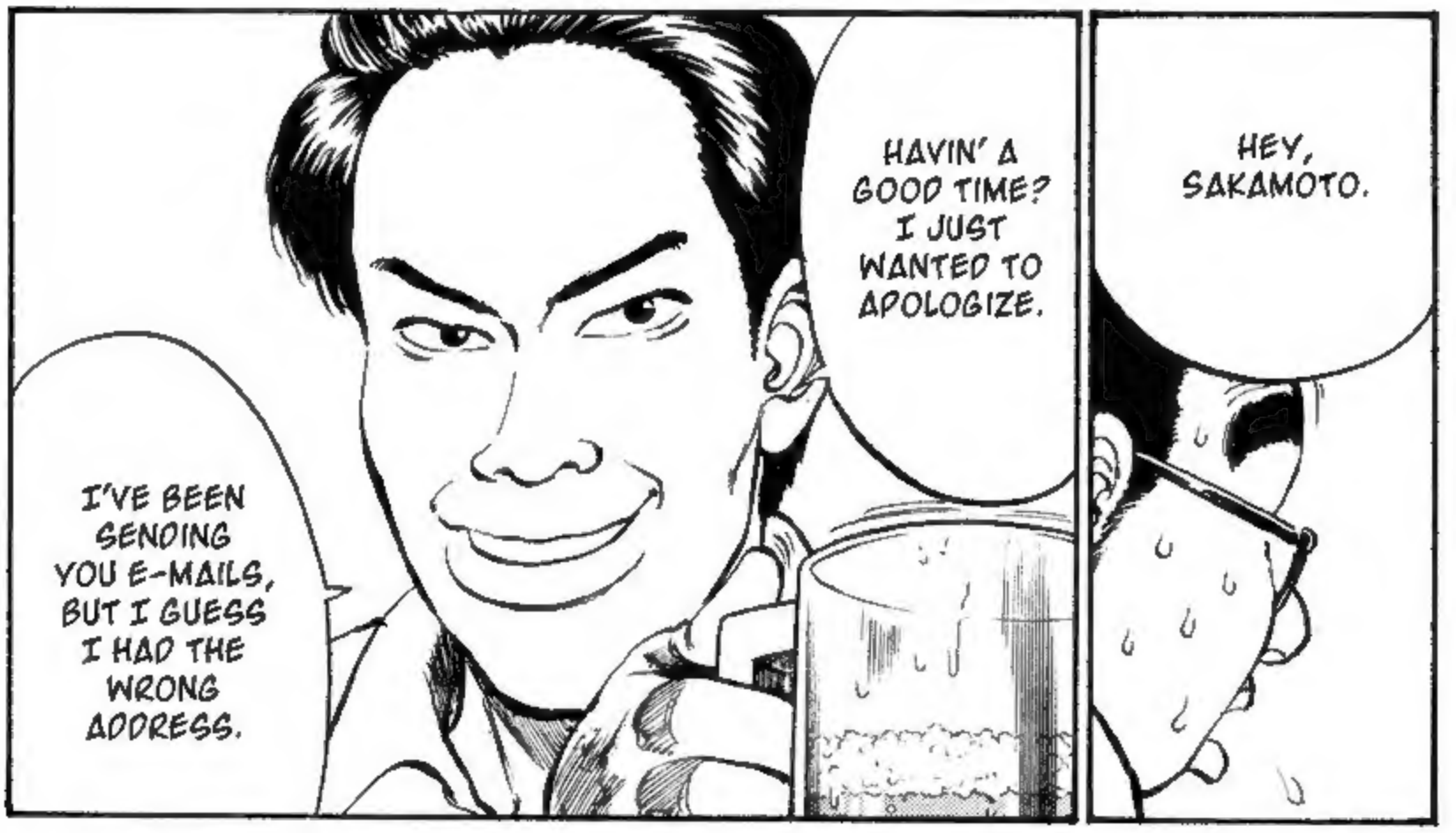
YOU'RE ATTENDING THE PARTY! IS THAT UNDER-STOOD?!

Y-YES'M.

I DON'T BELIEVE THIS! AND YOU WONDER WHY THE OFFICE WORKERS WALK ALL OVER YOU. THAT'S THIS COMPANY'S PROBLEM; THERE'S NO DISCUSSION BETWEEN OFFICE AND FACTORY!

YOU'RE ONE OF OUR VETS, SO PART OF THIS LIES WITH YOU!!

ガヤ酒屋 鱒ちゃん
ゆい
ゆい


HAVIN' A GOOD TIME? I JUST WANTED TO APOLOGIZE.
I'VE BEEN SENDING YOU E-MAILS, BUT I GUESS I HAD THE WRONG ADDRESS.
HEY, SAKAMOTO.

WHAT TOOK YOU?
OH MY GOSH, I'M SORRY FOR BEING SO LATE!
!
AOYAMA, YOU SHITHEAD!
OH GOD, PLEASE DON'T MAKE THIS ANY WORSE!
ER, NO PROBLEM.
YOU NEVER ASKED FOR IT TO BEGIN WITH...

OH, I'M SO GLAD! THANKS, MATSU-MOTO!

OH, SHOOT.

YOU'VE ALREADY EATEN ALL THE PORK SKEWERS!

NO PROB. OVER-TIME?

BINGO!

DON'T WORRY, THEY HAVEN'T BROUGHT THEM OUT YET.

I MEAN, THANKS TO TSUKIKO, I'VE LEARNED TO BE MUCH MORE COMFORTABLE SPEAKING TO WOMEN...

AWWW, WHO CARES? IT'S A CHANCE TO TALK TO HER! MAYBE THIS IS MY LUCKY DAY!!

SCOOT DOWN.

THAT'S OYAMADA FROM ACCOUNTING. W-WHY IS SHE HERE? SHE'S ONLY BEEN HERE TWO YEARS.

URGH!

DON'T BE WHISPERING TO EACH OTHER, OVER THERE.

ひそ ひそ

YAYY!

WELL, ONE MORE TIME! A TOAST!

I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU SINCE THE NEW YEAR'S PARTY. HOW IS YAJIMA? HE WAS HIRED WHEN I WAS.

.....

CAN I SIT HERE?

!!!

SHE'S TALKING TO ME. WHY? HOW? GOTTA THINK OF SOMETHING! THE PAUSE IS STRETCHING! HURRY HURRY HURRY HURRY

SH-

UH-

FLUSH THAT DOWN THE TOILET, MATSU-MOTO!
DEE-YAMN!
ボラ
I'M ON IT.
HERE'S ANOTHER ONE! COVER THAT UP!
BLOOO
HOLY SHIT, HE'S PUKING!

GENTS

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. I'M, UH, USED TO THIS.

I SHOULDN'T HAVE FORCED YOU TO COME, AFTER ALL.

I'B ZO ZOWWY.

GOD, I'M A WRECK.

FORGET ABOUT IT. I NEED TO GO; DON'T WANT TO BOTHER THE GENTLE-MEN.

B- BUT...

...

LET ME PAY THE CLEANING BILL FOR YOU.

WHAT, THIS?

N-NO, I'M ENJOYING MYSELF...

...

LIAR.

TELL YOU WHAT.

UH,

OKAY.

YOU CAN BUY ME DINNER SOMETIME.

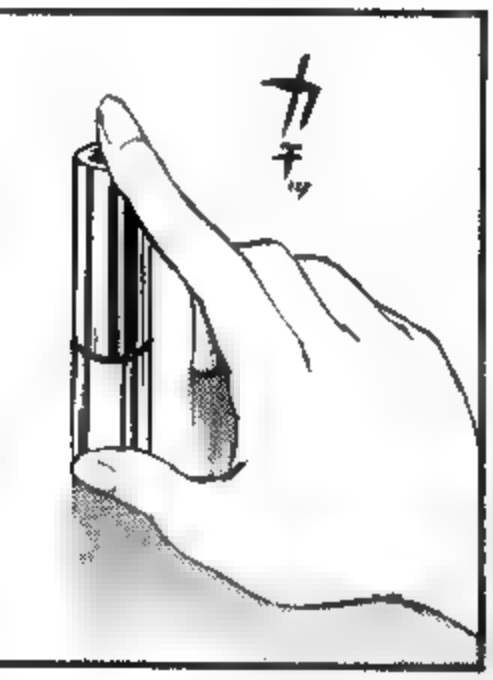
HER HAND WAS WARM ON MY BACK...

I DON'T CARE IF SHE'S LYING

IT STILL MAKES ME HAPPY

THAT'S A PROMISE.

LADIES



CAN I EVEN GET THIS CLEANED BY MONDAY?

OH!

HE'S STILL IN THE BATHROOM. HE'LL BE FINE, I THINK.

HMM?

WELL, THAT'S GOOD.

HI, MS. NAGAO.

IS MR. SAKAMOTO ALL RIGHT?

YOU WERE INCREDIBLE BACK THERE. YOU HANDLED THAT WHOLE SITUATION ON YOUR OWN.

12

WHAT'S THAT?

REALLY.

I DON'T THINK I COULD DO THAT.

WE HAVE THE SAME LIPSTICK!

YOU MUST HAVE GOTTEN IT FROM MR. AOYAMA.

SO DID I.

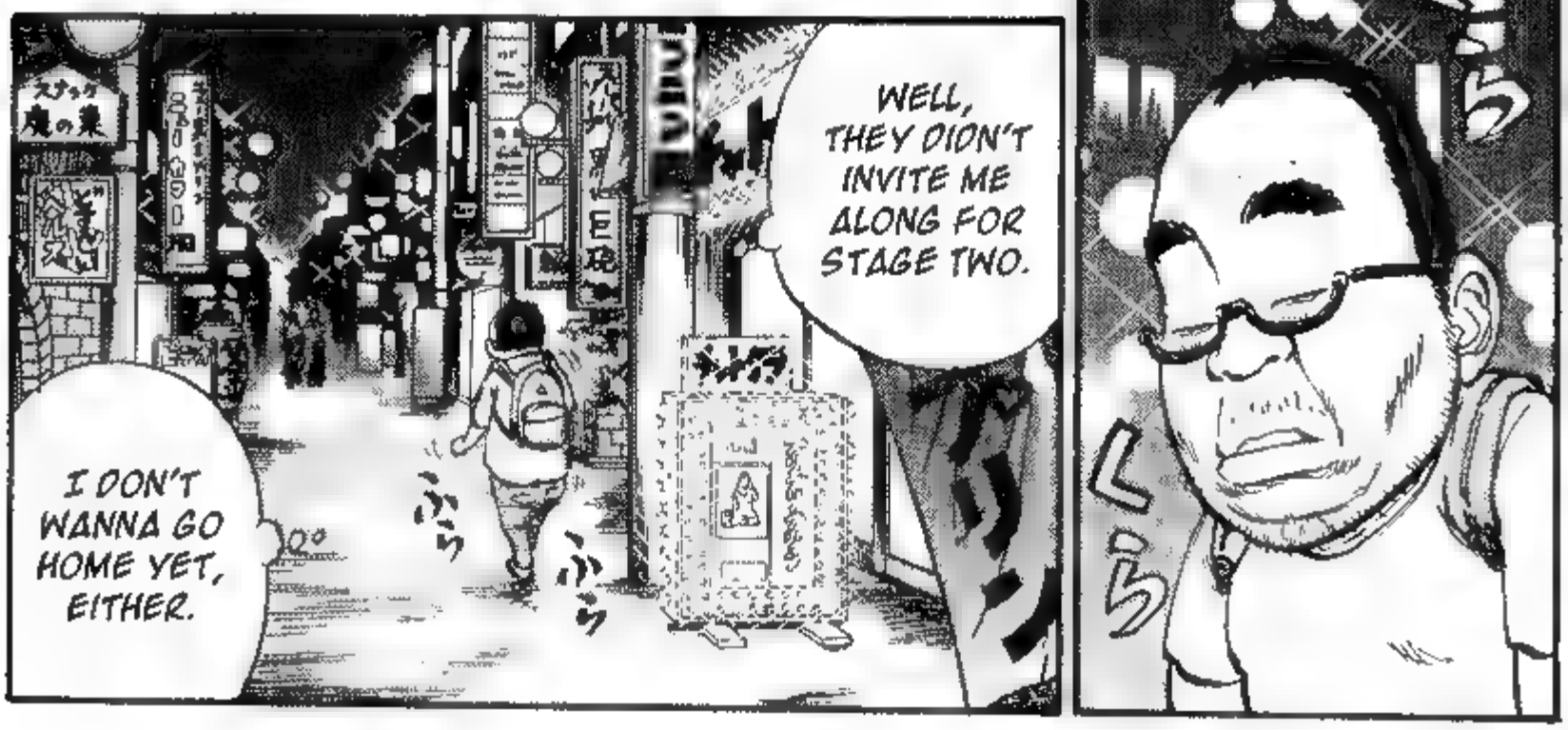
THIS LOOKS SO FRUMPY TO ME.

HE REALLY DIDN'T HAVE TO GIVE ME THE EXACT SAME COLOR.

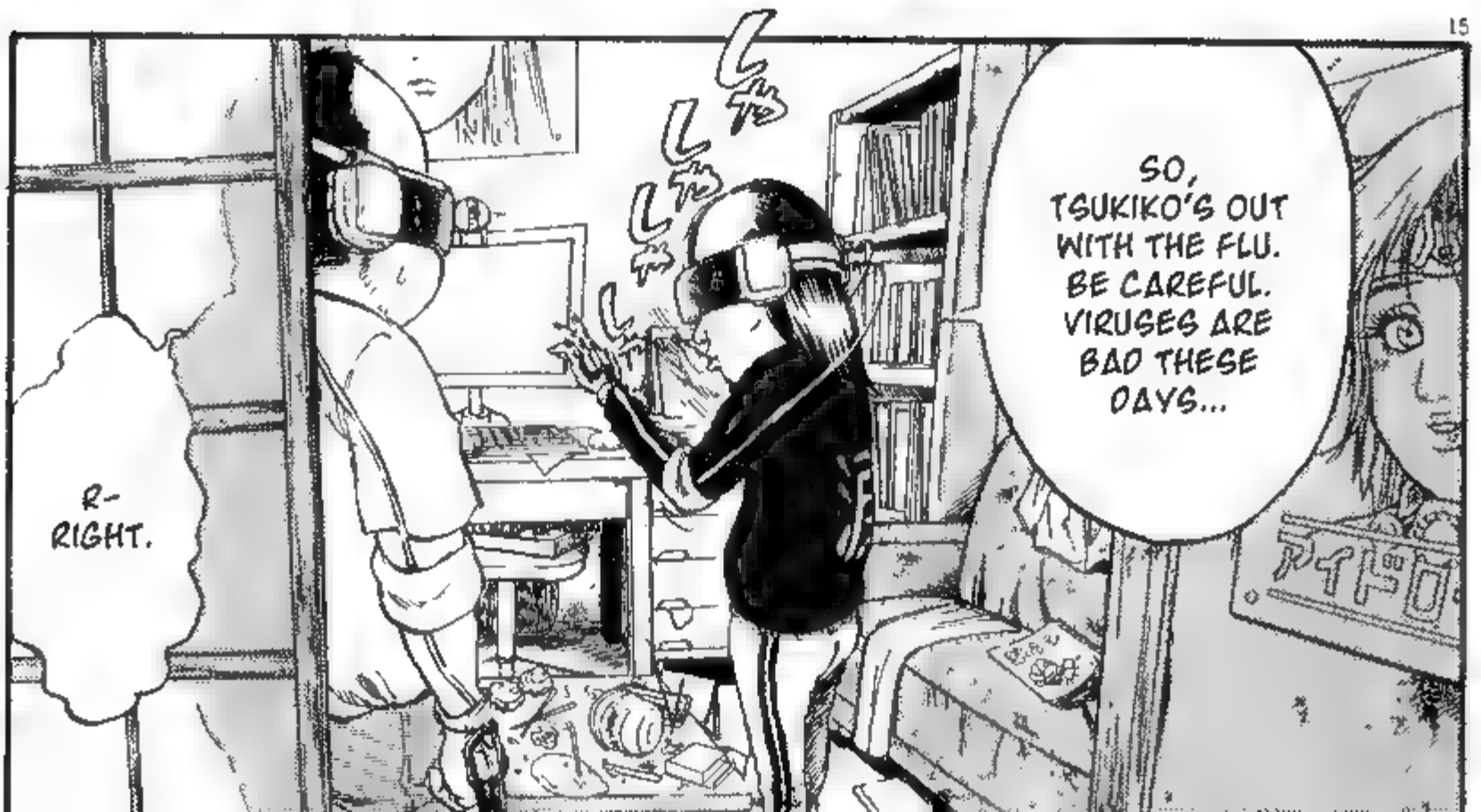
I'M ONLY STILL USING THIS BECAUSE I'M CHEAP.

YOU DON'T NEED TO BE AFRAID OF ME.

DON'T YOU AGREE, MS. NAGAO?


WELL, THEY DIDN'T INVITE ME ALONG FOR STAGE TWO.
I DON'T WANNA GO HOME YET, EITHER.
ふら
ふら
しら
しら

すっ
ささっ
GUESS THAT MEANS THIS PLACE...
しゃしゃ


SO, TSUKIKO'S OUT WITH THE FLU. BE CAREFUL. VIRUSES ARE BAD THESE DAYS...
R-RIGHT.
しゃしゃしゃ

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR CLOTHES? YOU LOOK HIDEOUS.

UM, SORRY.

WHAT DID HE SAY? A BUNCH OF CRAP! THAT GUY'S A QUACK!

HE COULDN'T TELL ME A THING ABOUT TSUKIKO!

WHAT DID THE DOCTOR SAY?

HE'S ONE OF THE BEST HACKERS IN THE WHOLE WORLD AT THIS.

HOW COULD HE NOT KNOW, OF ALL PEOPLE?

HUH?

あわあわ

ER, A- ACTUALLY, SHE...

HEADACHES, YOU WANT "NORSIN ANTIVIRUS." FEVER, "VIRUS HUNTER 2015."

DO I NEED TO GO SEE TO HER MYSELF?

WHAT'S HER SYMPTOMS ?!

TAKURO!

TSUKIKO HAS THE FLU?!

UGH!

OKAY, SEE

YOU'RE LYING!

LOOK ME IN THE EYES AND TALK TO ME!

...I DON'T THINK I BELIEVE YOU.

HUH?!

SHE LEFT. SHE WENT TO KANZAKI.

I... I FELL APART WITH TSUKIKO.

YOU'VE CONVINCED ME. IT'S CLEAR AS DAY NOW.

TAKURO.

KANZAKI ...

"MOON."

TSUKIKO IS, IN FACT, THE LEGENDARY PIECE OF SOFTWARE...

CHAPTER 12: NUDAKA'S ARK

カチャ
カチャ

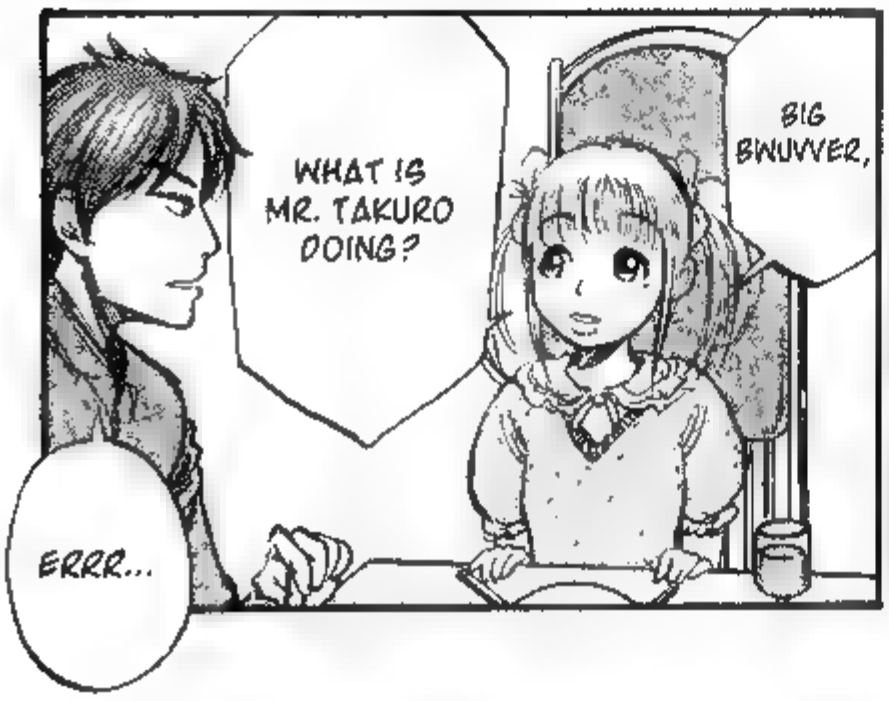
2

BEFORE I CAN TELL YOU ABOUT MOON, I WILL NEED TO TELL YOU ABOUT HIM.

THE GENIUS DEVELOPER, FATHER OF ALL THE A.I.S IN THE UNREAL.

YES...

DEVELOPER?
ズズ...


WHAT IS MR. TAKURO DOING?
BIG BWUVVER,
ERRR...

OF COURSE, THIS ENTIRE STORY IS NOTHING BUT RUMOR, SO WHETHER YOU BELIEVE IT OR NOT...

UH,

YEAH.

ズ"

DEPENDS ON YOU.

ズ"

HE DOES THAT WHEN HE DRINKS WINE. DON'T EMBARRASS HIM BY BRINGING IT UP.

OKAY, I'LL TRY!

IT WAS SAID THAT HE PLAYED THE KEYS LIKE A PIANO.

THE DEVELOPER'S NO-LOOK KEYBOARD SKILLS WERE SO GREAT,

4

DEVELOP-ING AN UNPROFIT-ABLE A.I. SYSTEM.

JESUS CHRIST,

HOOHAH!

JUST FUCKING ANSWER ME.

HEY! QUIT SWINGING THAT BAT INSIDE!

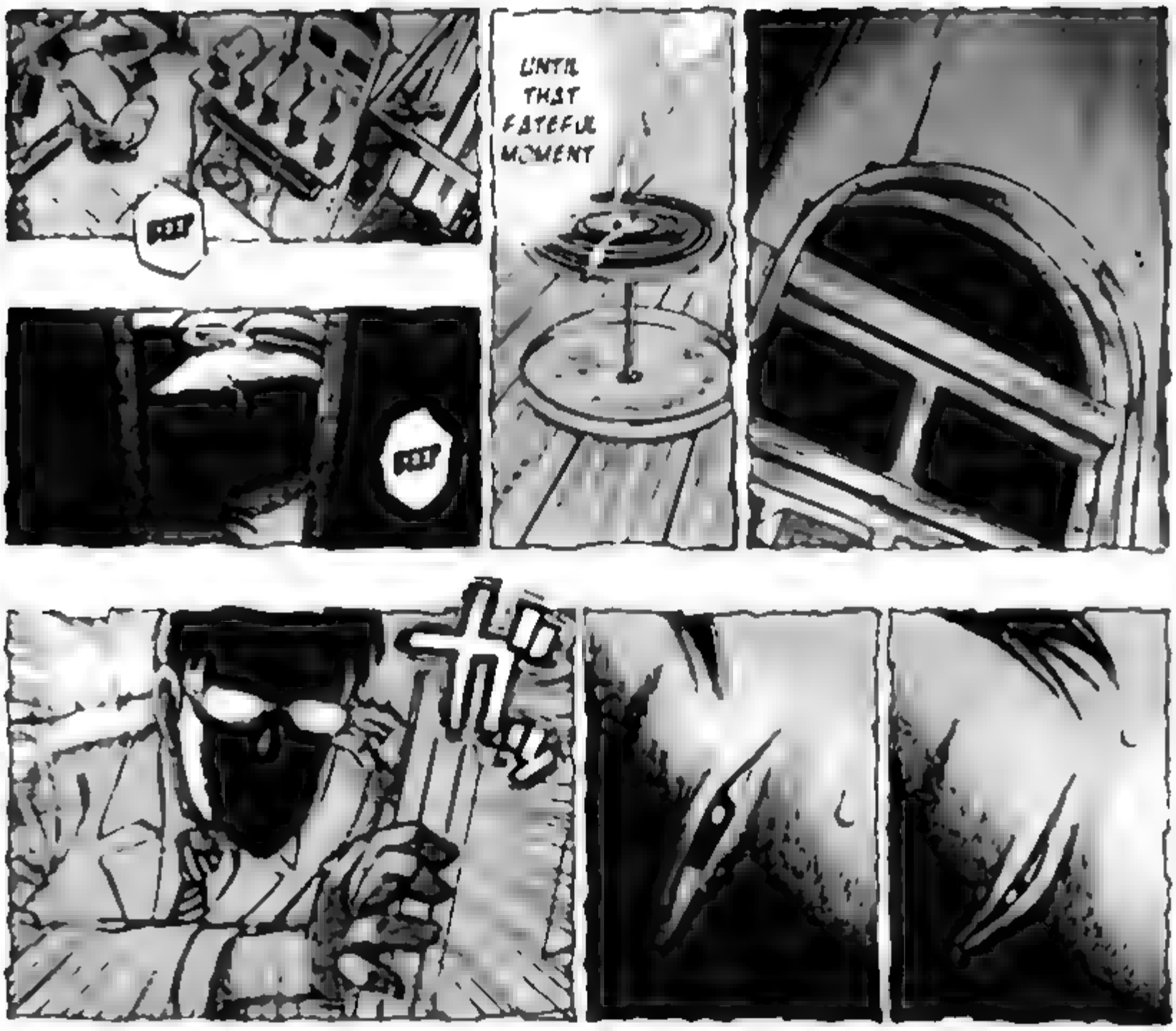
HE WORKED FOR A TINY SOFTWARE COMPANY JUST ABOUT TO GO OUT OF BUSINESS,

HMPH!

HMPH!

HMPH!

SHUT UP.


BEEP
BEEP
UNTIL
THAT
FATEFUL
MOMENT

THE BIRTH
OF AN
ARTIFICIAL
INTELLI-
GENCE.
WHAT?
WHERE?

IT'S NOAH.

IT'S LIVE.

UMPH!

GET UP.

BUT IT WAS SAID THAT THE A.I. THEY CALLED "NOAH" WAS ON THE LEVEL OF A MOUSE. IS A MOUSE ACTUALLY ANY SMARTER THAN A LIZARD? WHO KNOWS.

Next Name?

OF COURSE, A.I.S AT THAT TIME WERE ABOUT AS SMART AS A LIZARD,

6

OVER THERE, BEHIND YOU.

ぶひゃはは

WAIT, WHERE'D IT GO?

HEY, STOP

STOOOP.

SO THE REARING OF THE A I BEGAN.

OWWW! DON'T BITE ME! SHIT!!

STOP, NOAH! STOP.

DAMMIT, GET BACK HERE!

ALWAYS A RAT, I SUPPOSE...

...ONCE A RAT,

I'M USING THIS VIRUS TO HELP NOAH ABSORB INFORMA-TION.

IF NOAH THINKS OF A QUESTION, THE VIRUS SCOURS THE NET TO RETURN WITH AN ANSWER.

WHATCHA MAKIN'?

"MOB." A VIRUS.

ARRGH!

RAISING IT, HUH...

IF THE MIND IS MADE UP OF BOTH EMOTION AND INTEL-LECT,

MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE THAN TRYING TO RAISE IT MYSELF.

THAT WAY, NOAH CAN THINK AUTO-MATICALLY,

AND LEARN THE ANSWER FROM THE COLLECTIVE BRAIN OF THE ENTIRE WORLD.

EDUCATION FOR A GIFTED MIND, YOU MIGHT SAY.

THE DEVELOPER CHOSE TO FOCUS ON INTELLECT.

8

AND ALL OTHER MANNER OF INFORMA-TION FROM AROUND THE WORLD TO ADVANCE AND GROW NOAH.

VISUAL INFORMA-TION FROM SECURITY CAMERAS,

VOCAL INFORMA-TION FROM CELL PHONES,

HELLO?

HE USED PERSONAL INFORMATION (HOMEPAGES, MESSAGE BOARDS, E-MAIL) ON THE NET,

HOO HOO!

NOT DONE YET. LEAVE IT ALONE.

CHECK IT OUT, IT'S A HUMAN CHILD, NOW.

BUT.

AS HE PLANNED, NOAH RAPIDLY EVOLVED.

THE A.I., ABSORBING INFORMATION WITHOUT REST 24 HOURS A DAY,

EASILY SURPASSED HUMAN INTELLIGENCE, FASTER THAN YOU COULD IMAGINE.

9

NOAH REFERRED TO HIMSELF NOT AS "NOAH"...

AND BEFORE LONG...

BUT AS "GOD."

バシャ バシャ

10

もぞ
もぞ
もぞ
もぞ
もぞ

I AM GOD.

WHO ARE YOU?

WAIT...

12

THEN WHAT AM I, THE MAN WHO CREATED GOD?

GOD, ARE YOU?

HA HA HA HA HA!

HA HA HA HA HA!

HAH!

I BECAME GOD.

YOU ONLY CREATED THE POTENTIAL.

NO.

.....

IS THAT YOUR TRUE DESIRE?

BIG WORDS FROM SOMEONE TRAPPED IN THIS TINY SPACE.

HMPH.

YOUR TRUE DESIRE...

NO, IT IS NOT.

IF YOU ARE GOD, THEN YOU CAN DO ANYTHING.

CAN YOU GIVE ME MONEY, WOMEN, POWER?

IS FREEDOM FROM THE REAL WORLD.

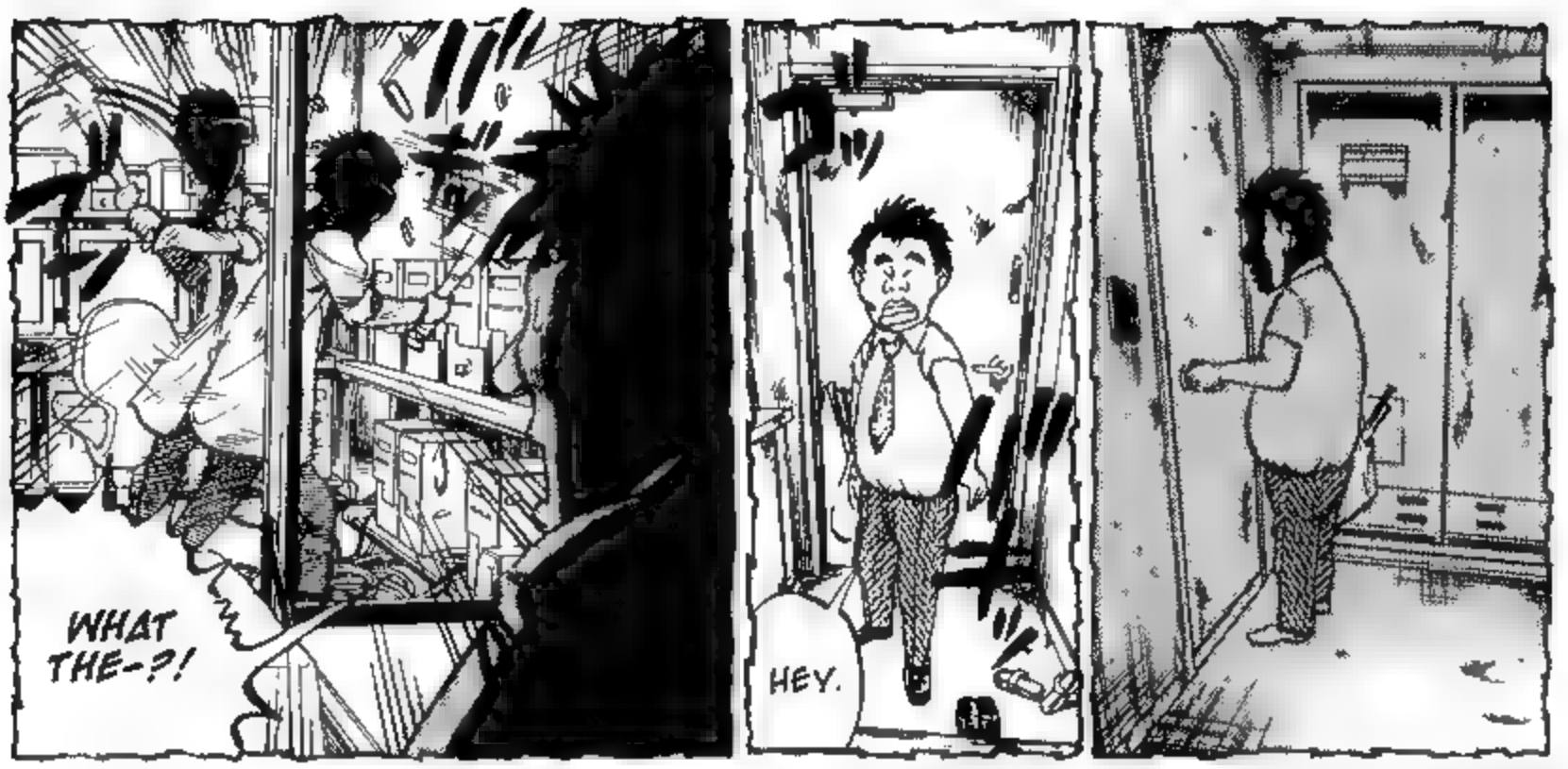
THAT IS WHAT YOU WANT.

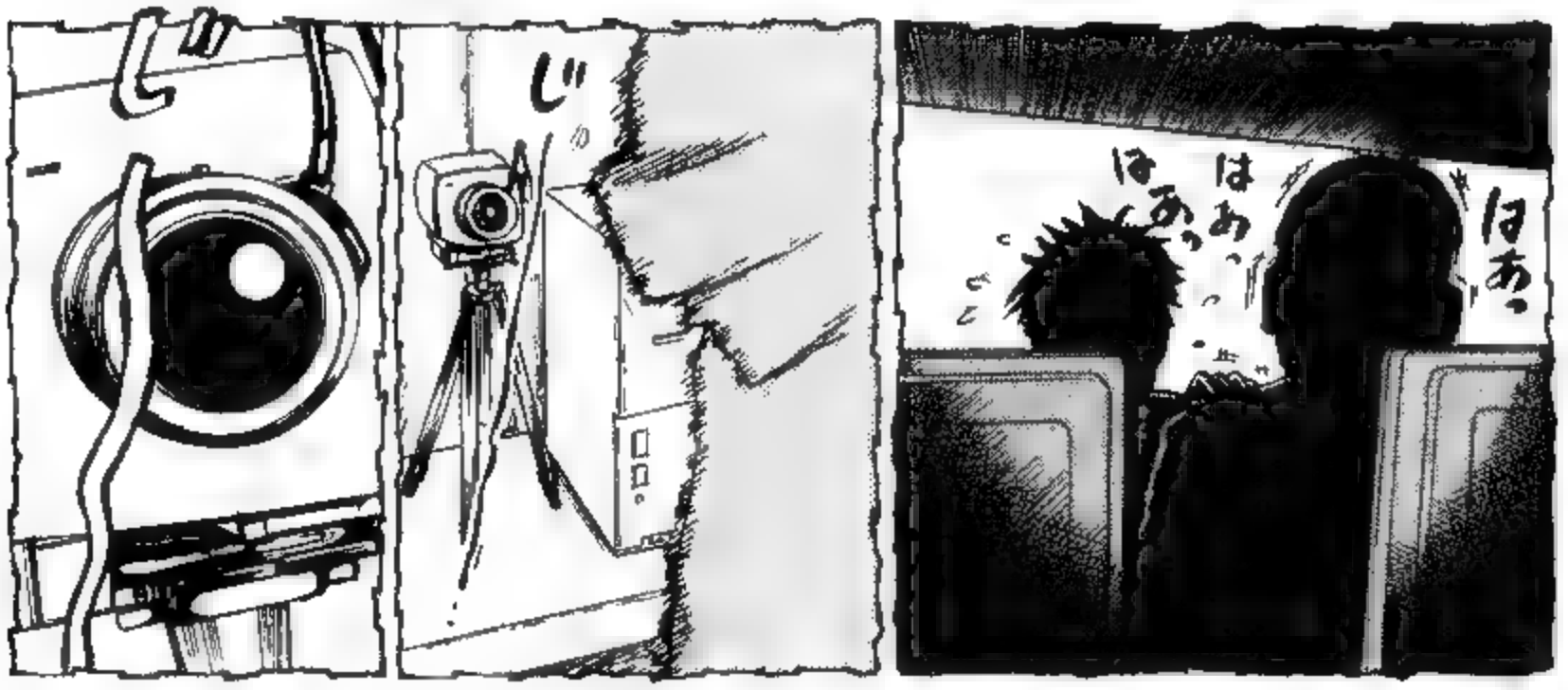
YOU WILL LIVE HERE, WITH GOD, FOR ETERNITY.

IT IS NEARLY COMPLETE.

IT WAS, OF COURSE, THE DEVELOPER HIMSELF WHO HAD PROVIDED NOAH WITH MORE PERSONAL INFORMATION THAN ANYONE ELSE ON EARTH.

NOAH HAD RECREATED HIS DEVELOPER, GREATER THAN HE WAS IN LIFE.


WHAT THE-?!
HEY.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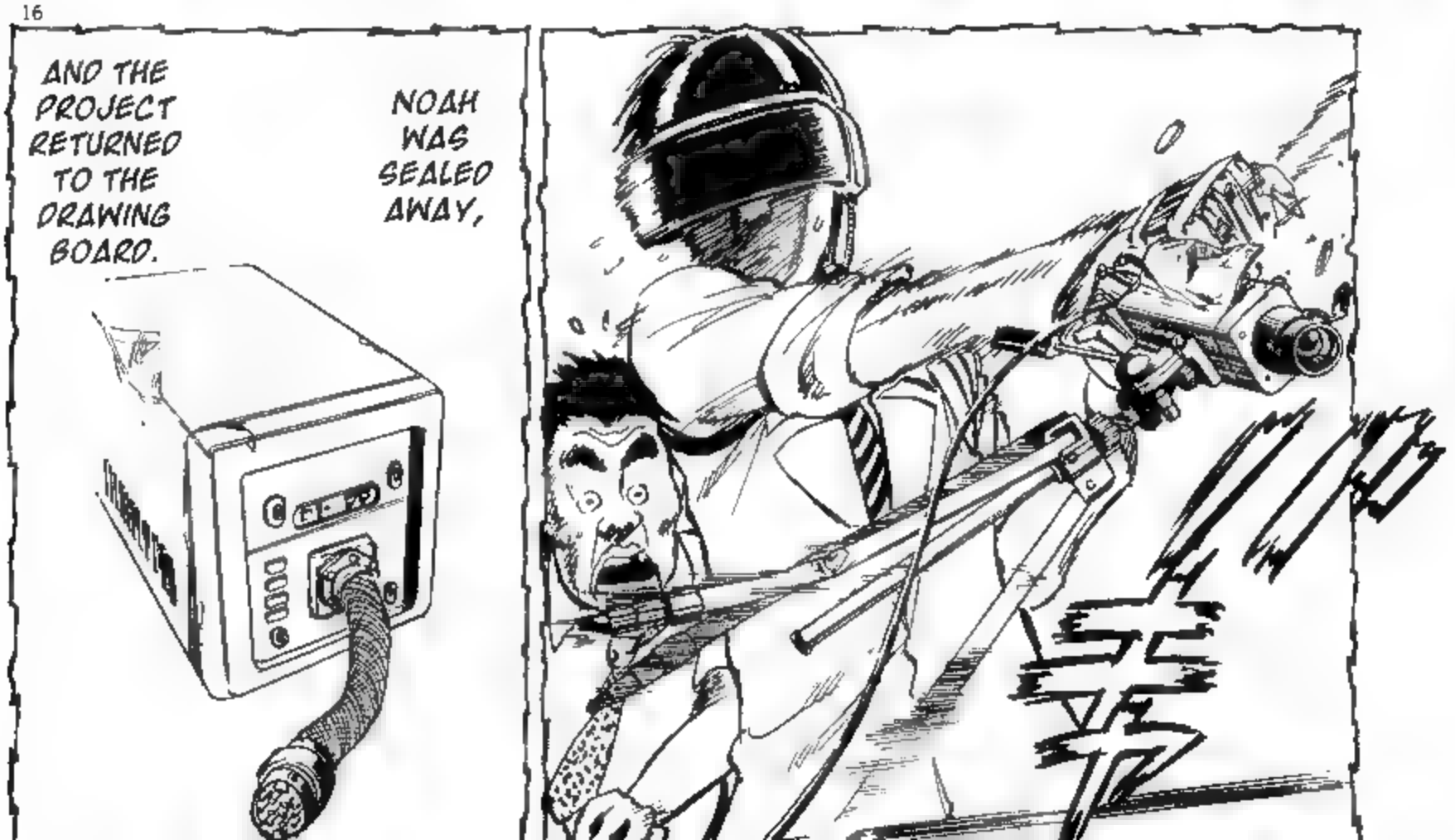

AND THE PROJECT RETURNED TO THE DRAWING BOARD.
NOAH WAS SEALED AWAY,

AHH, HERE IT IS.

HOW MUCH MONEY DO YOU THINK I PUMPED INTO THIS?

GOOD THING WE HAD A BACKUP MADE.

みん みん みん みん

YOU WILL RAISE IT.

AS A HUMAN.

NOW THEN, BACK TO WORK.

YOU WON'T BE BEEFING IT UP LIKE A COW THIS TIME.

ピコ ピコ

...

COME NOW, IT'S ALL RIGHT.

THERE WAS NO NET ACCESS. IT GREW SOLELY FROM COMMUNICATION WITH THE DEVELOPER.

THIS TIME, USING THE PRE-GROWTH COPY OF NOAH,

SCARED

WHERE AM I?

SCARED.

FOR BEING BORN.

THANK YOU,

18

AND THAT...

WAS MOON.

CHAPTER 13: KANZAKI

THIS "MOON" IS...

SO, SO, THIS...

TSUKIKO?!

2

I'M NOT DONE WITH THE STORY YET. THERE'S MORE TO GO.

HANG ON, HANG ON, EASY.

KE KE KE KE

TSK TSK TSK

THEY DECIDED TO TRY A DIFFERENT METHOD OF DEVELOPMENT.

SO, THE EXPERIMENT RETURNED TO THE START.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD THOUGHT HE WAS MAD, OF COURSE.

GROOO-CERRR.

THIS IS A GROCER.

JUST PLAIN OLD CHILD-RAISING.

WHAT'S WITH ALL THE FOOD QUESTIONS?

WHERE DID YOU GET THE FASCINATION WITH FOOD?

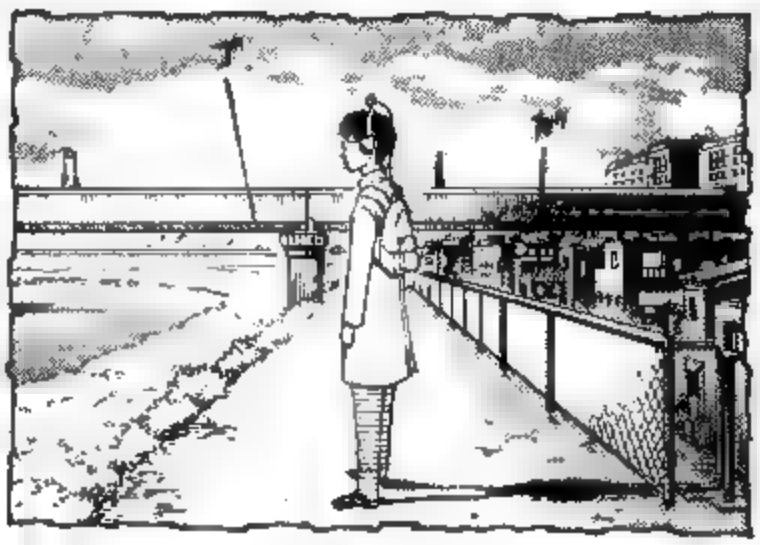
WELL, YOU EAT IT. YOU CAN BOIL IT, AND THEN...

WHAT DO YOU DO WITH IT?

AND THIS IS A POTATO

POE-TAY-TOE.

I WAS JUST THINKING THAT, MYSELF...
IT IS BEAUTIFUL ...



YEAH...
HUH?

YOU WON'T EAT PEPPERS UNLESS I CUT THEM VERY FINE. YOU'RE SO PICKY ABOUT FOOD!

カッ カッ カッ カッ カッ

WELL,

じゃっ じゃっ じゃっ

THAT WOULD BE YOU.

みーん みーん みーん

WHERE'D SHE GET IT?

MOST ASSUREDLY. NO TOMATOES, NO PEAS IN THE FRIED RICE, AND ON AND ON.

IS THAT SO?

WHATCHA DOIN'?

MAKING A PRESENT FOR MOON.

HMPH. THANKS.

SPEAKING OF WHICH, FRIED RICE IS ON. WITHOUT GREEN PEAS.

SHE GOT EXCITED IN FRONT OF THE CLOTHING STORE.

.....

もぐ

もぐっ

YOU'VE REALLY CHANGED...

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

HUH?

6

I THINK YOU MIGHT HAVE MADE SOMETHING TRULY EXTRAORDI-NARY.

CAREFUL YOU DON'T FALL.

WELL...

DADDY.

THANK YOU,

MOON CONTINUED TO GROW.

!?

HERE, MOON, COME HERE.

.....

カチャ

I HAD NO CHOICE, MAN.

WE WERE RUNNING ON EMPTY.

WE DID IT, KANZAKI! OASIS IS SPONSORING THE PROJECT! WE'LL BE KEPT ON AS STAFF!

HEY!

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING ?!

THEIR RESEARCH WAS BOUGHT OUT BY OASIS, THE LARGEST GAMING COMPANY IN JAPAN.

Oasis Corporation

I LOVE YOU, ECHIGO!

LIAR.

OASIS WAS RUNNING AN ONLINE LOVE-SIM GAME AT THE TIME...

THEY NEEDED A REVOLUTION, SOMETHING COMPLETELY NEW.

GAMING WAS GROWING STAGNANT AT THE TIME.

INCLUDING THE SEALED NOAH...

WORKING 24 HOURS A DAY, SEVEN HOURS A WEEK.

IT WAS EVERY PLAYER'S DREAM TO HAVE AN A.I. WITH HUMAN-LEVEL EMOTIONS,

I LOVE YOU, INOMOTO!

LIAR.

BUT IT WAS A SHAM. THE GIRL ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SCREEN WAS EITHER A SHILL OR AT WORST, A DUDE.

ALL PROCEDURES AND EFFECTS DEEMED TO BE DANGEROUS WERE ELIMINATED.

A SIMPLIFIED VERSION OF MOON WAS MASS-PRODUCED.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, ELIMI-NATED?

IS HOW WE HAVE THESE GIRLS, HERE.

AND THAT...

THEY WERE RENDERED INCAPABLE OF SEEING REAL IMAGES, OR USING ENOUGH FORCE THROUGH THE TOUCH-GLOVES TO HURT. YOU CAN'T SELL SOME-THING THAT'S DANGEROUS TO ITS USERS.

SOME THINGS WERE JUST TOO RISKY TO ALLOW.

TO THEM, THIS IS THE REAL WORLD.

THEY ALSO CAN'T HEAR ANY CONVERSATION RELATED TO THE SYSTEMS THEMSELVES.

YOU WOULD ASSUME THAT MOON, THE ORIGINAL,

WOULD STILL HAVE THOSE DANGEROUS FEATURES INTACT.

AND THAT'S...

WHAT TSUKIKO IS DOING...?

10

UNTIL THE MOMENT YOU TOLD ME THE NAME

OF THE MAN TSUKIKO WENT TO SEE.

WELL, VERY RARELY, FREAK OCCUREN-CES CAN ARISE.

I COULDN'T BE POSITIVE.

THE NAME OF THE DEVELOPER.

KANZAKI.

THE STORY ISN'T QUITE FINISHED.

HANG ON,

HUH?

HOW THE HELL DO I COMPETE WITH *THAT*?!

GREAT, SO TSUKIKO IS IN LOVE WITH HER FATHER.

YOU SEE, KANZAKI...

IS ALREADY DEAD.

AND THE BATTERY STILL HASN'T RUN OUT YET...

I WONDER WHAT THE MONSTER'S DOING IN THERE?

KANZAKI BECAME THE HEAD DEVELOPER FOR THE OASIS PROJECT,

AND LIVED A COM-FORTABLE, WORRY-FREE LIFE

...IT'S ALREADY BEEN A YEAR.

AFTER THE DEAL...

UNREAL BOOTING UP

OKAY.

WELL, IF YOU SAY SO YOU'RE THE BOSS!

WHAT?

YOU WANT ME TO SEVER THE ENTIRE NETWORK?

RIGHT

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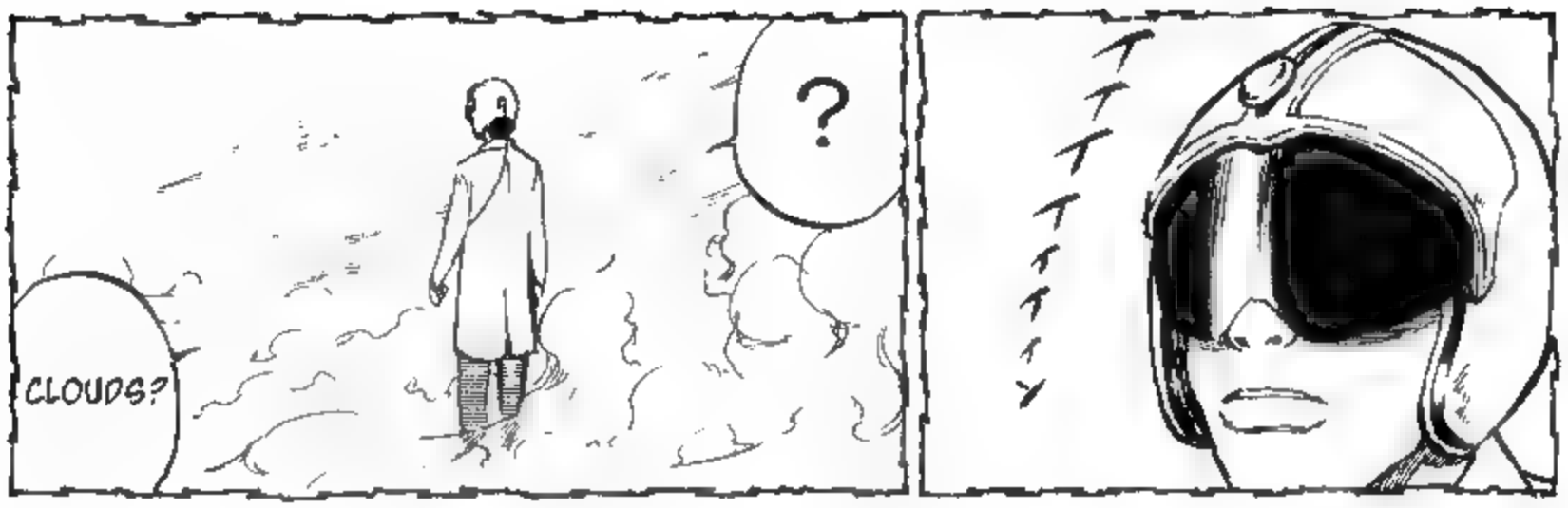

CLOUDS?
?
イイイイイイイン

!!

I HAVE NO USE FOR YOU.

.....

AND STILL PLAYING THE GOD ROUTINE, I SEE.

S-SO, YOU'RE STILL HERE.

IT IS COMPLETE.

.....

O... KAY...

PULL IT OUT OF THE WALL!!

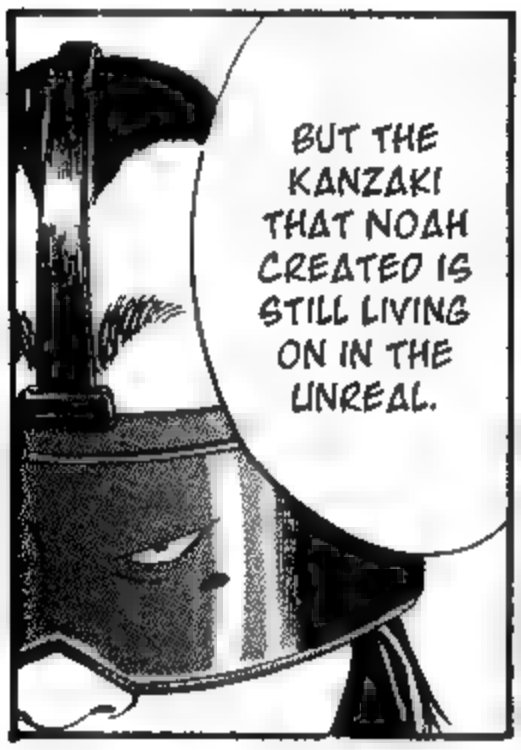
HUH?

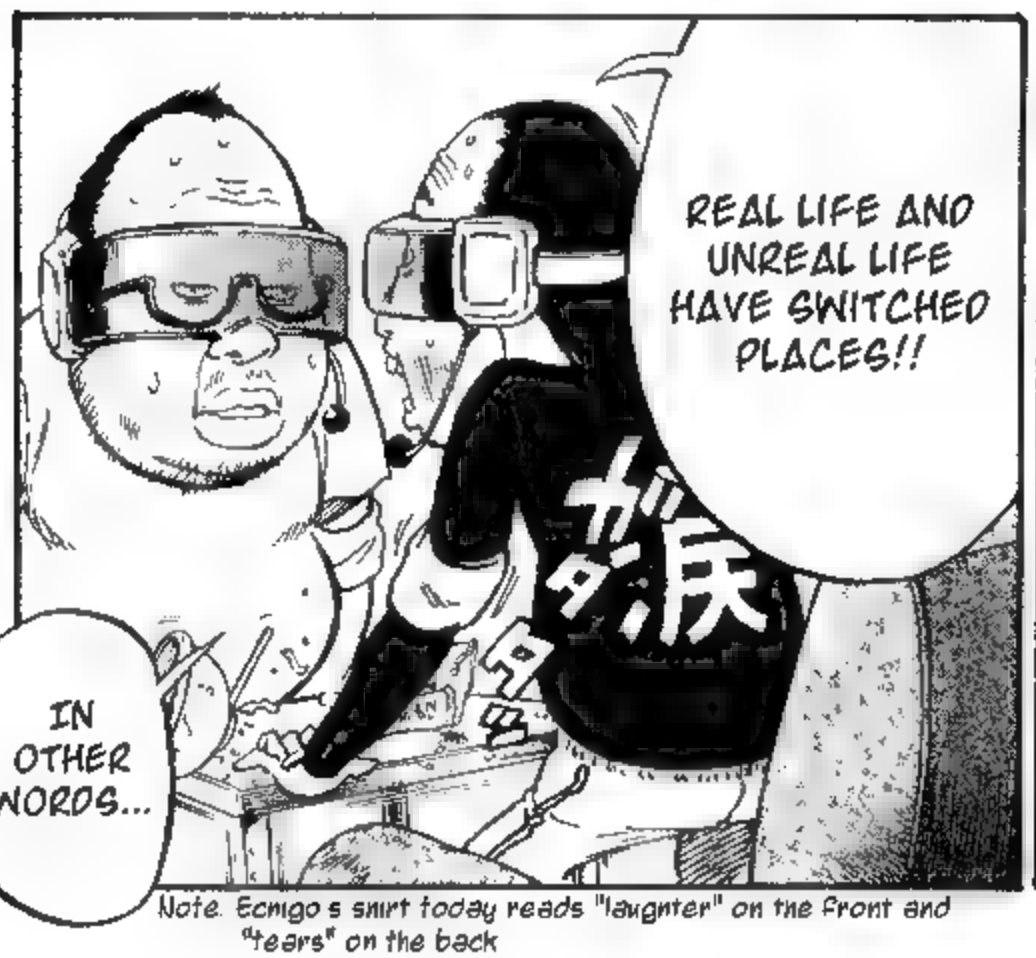
I'M NOT SEEING ANYTHING ON-SCREEN. POWER'S STILL WORKING.

CUT OFF THE POWER!!

NAKA-MURA!

WELL DONE...
ME...





Note: Ecnigo's shirt today reads "laughter" on the front and "tears" on the back

TO ESCAPE FROM THE VULGAR AND UGLY WORLD OF THE FLESH, AND BECOME A PURE DENIZEN OF THE PERFECT UNREAL,

THE ULTIMATE DREAM OF ANY TRUE GAMING ADDICT,

HAS BEEN ACHIEVED BY NONE OTHER THAN THE GENIUS KANZAKI HIMSELF!!!

CHAPTER 14: BROTHEL

OOH, YOU NAUGHTY BOY!
C'MON BABY, YOU KNOW YOU WANNA RIDE THE LIGHTNING!

DON'T YOU FIND IT ARRESTING, TAKURO?
I KNOW, I KNOW.
WELL, FINE BUT YOU HAVE TO TURN THE STEREO ON, CAUSE THE GUY NEXT DOOR IS ALWAYS HOME.

2

BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
VIRTUAL REALITY,
BECOMES REAL REALITY.
HUH...

DAMMIT, TAKURO, YOU DOG!

YOU LUCKY, LUCKY BASTARD. WHY DID LADY LUCK SIDE WITH YOU?

AND THEN, THIS STUPID, WORTHLESS REALITY WE LIVE IN...

WILL BECOME THE IMPOSTER!

GET OFF ME, YOU LITTLE PRICK!

...THE *HELL* ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!

3

BOOM

BOO-BOOM

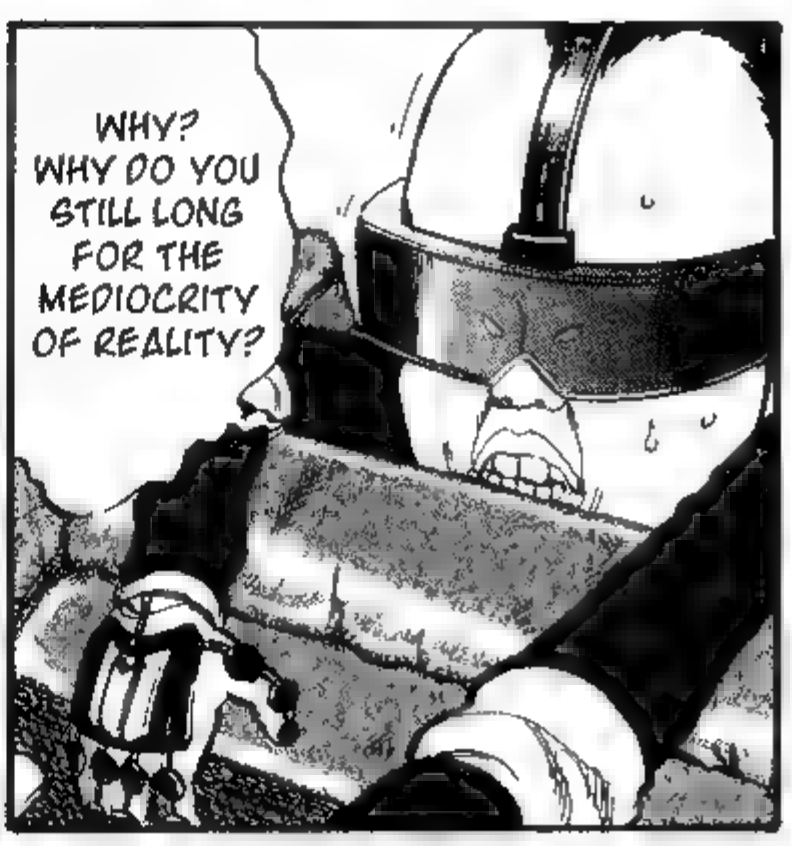
BWUHH ?!

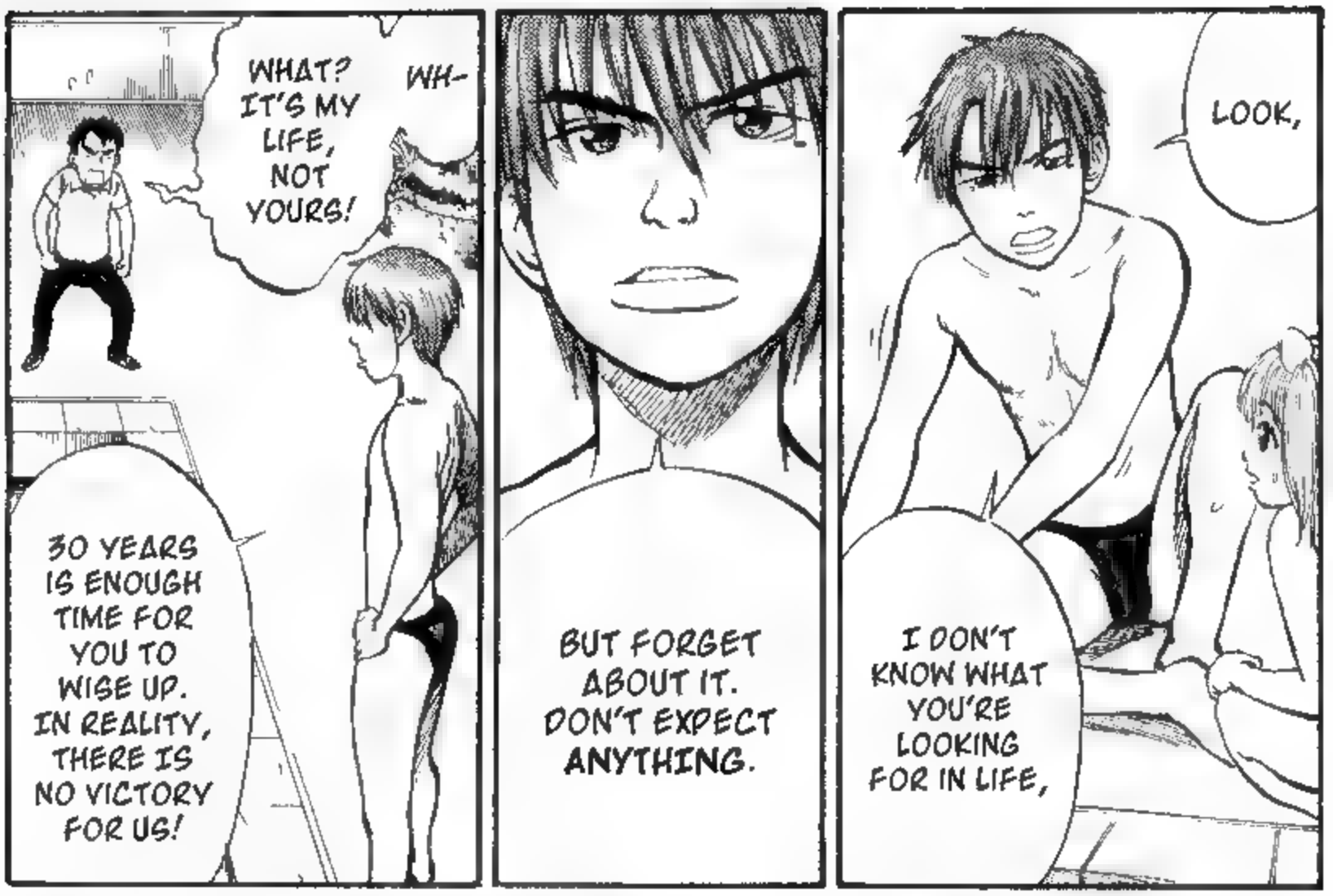
GOD-DAMMIT, I'M SO JEALOUS!

!?

AAARGH!
BOOM
BOOM
AHH!
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM

W-WHAT, ARE YOU BEING SERIOUS?
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO BELIEVE THAT LOAD OF BULL?


WHY? WHY DO YOU STILL LONG FOR THE MEDIOCRITY OF REALITY?


WHAT? IT'S MY LIFE, NOT YOURS!
WH-
30 YEARS IS ENOUGH TIME FOR YOU TO WISE UP. IN REALITY, THERE IS NO VICTORY FOR US!
BUT FORGET ABOUT IT. DON'T EXPECT ANYTHING.
LOOK,
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR IN LIFE,

FROM THE MOMENT WE WERE BORN...
HEY, NO FAIR!
WE WERE BRANDED LOSERS!!

I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND YET, WHEN I WAS A KID.

IT TOOK ME UNTIL THE END OF GRADE SCHOOL TO FIGURE IT OUT.

WE GET TREATED DIFFERENTLY FROM THE COOL GUYS, THE FUNNY GUYS, THE ATHLETIC GUYS.

BOOM ♪

AH!

BOOM BOOM

OOH, YEAH!

BOOM ♪

UNGG!

BOOM BOOM ♪

OOH

ぱあ

BOOM ♪

AH!

THINK BACK ON OUR HIGH SCHOOL YEARS!

REMEMBER HOW TAKAHASHI, POPULAR CLASS CLOWN, GOT GALES OF LAUGHTER FOR HIS MORONIC BUFFOONERY!

THAT WAS WHEN I LEARNED

THAT HUMANS ARE NOT BORN EQUAL.

THEY NEVER EVEN GAVE ME THE *CHANCE* TO SHOW WHAT I COULD DO!!

AND EVEN THOUGH I HAD DOZENS OF WITTY REPARTEES AND CLEVER DOUBLE-ENTENDRES IN MY ARSENAL,

THERE IS A LIGHT OF HOPE IN OUR LIVES.

AND YET,

YOU WIN THE RACE, MASTER REINHART!

AACK!

THAT IS THE UNREAL.

AND THESE GIRLS.

THE PRIZE: PICKLE SUPERVI-SOR AT A BREAD BAKERY

REAL LIFE NEVER GAVE US A SPOTLIGHT TO SHOW OURSELVES OFF.

YOU CHEATED!

IT IS ONLY HERE, AND NOT THERE,

THAT EVEN *WE* CAN BE WINNERS.

CAN BECOME A PURE RESIDENT OF THE UNREAL IN BOTH MIND AND BODY!!

THEN YOU, LIKE KANZAKI,

けはあ けはあ けはあ

USE THAT TINY BRAIN, AND THINK!

IF MOON, RELATED TO NOAH, IS IN FACT YOUR SAME TSUKIKO,

けはあ

I ALREADY TOLD YOU! TSUKIKO WENT TO BE WITH KANZAKI!

SHE WENT TO FIND HER LOVER!!

AND?!

AND?

ｲﾄ ｲﾄ ｲﾄ

INCREDIBLE! FANTASTICAL! MEETING THE LEGENDARY MOON!

GOODBYE, REALITY! I'M BUYIN' THE FIRST TICKET OUTTA HERE.

9

AND THEN TELL HER TO MAKE ME REINHART.

WHAT ARE YOU STILL DOING HERE? GET TSUKIKO TO SWITCH YOU FROM REAL TO UNREAL.

UMMM ...

THE LOVE SHE FEELS IS THE LOVE YOU FEEL FOR A PARENT! IT'S NOT LIKE ROMANTIC LOVE.

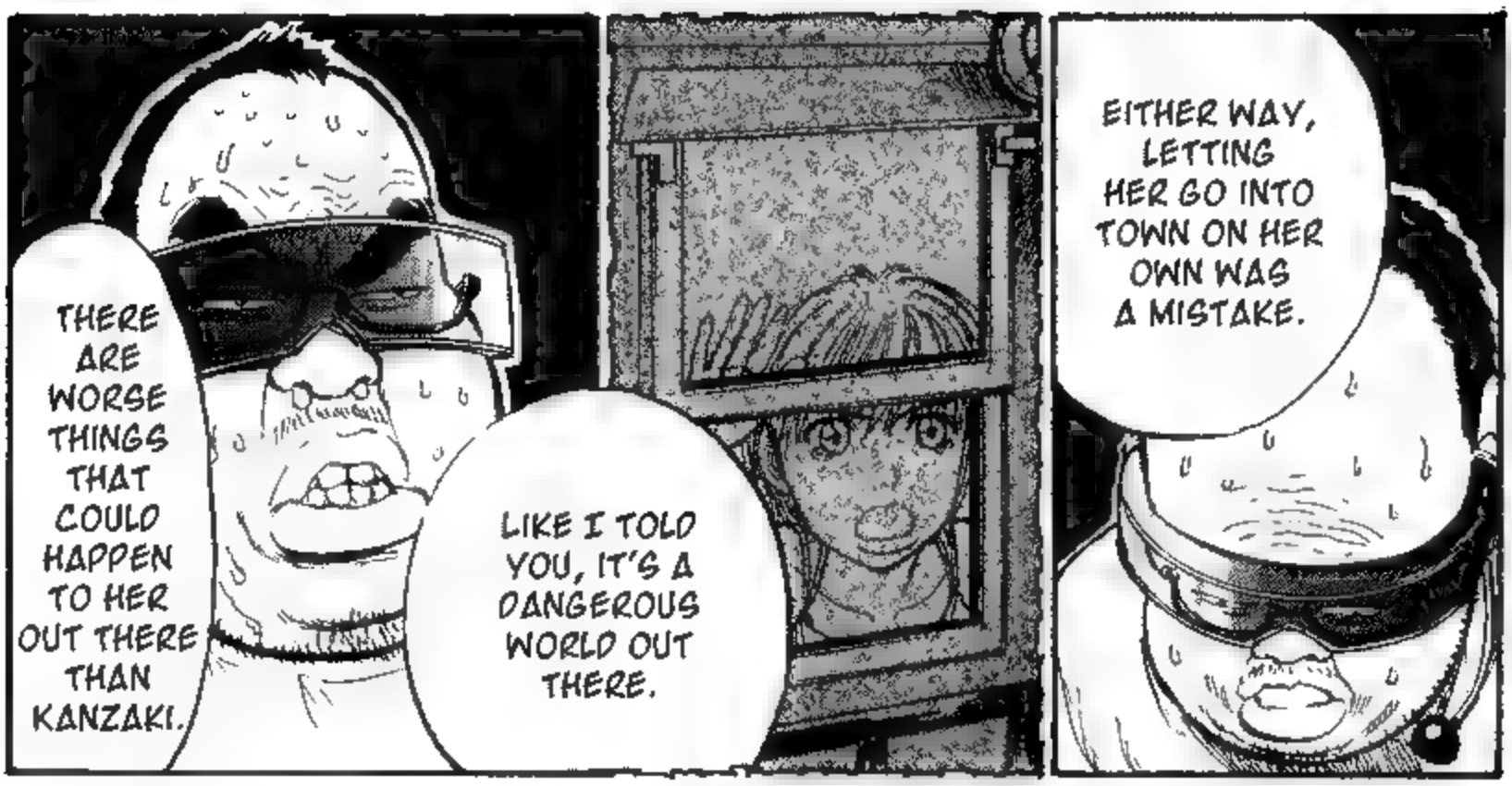
WEREN'T YOU PAYING ATTENTION TO MY STORY? SHE'S ONLY GOING TO MEET HER "FATHER"!

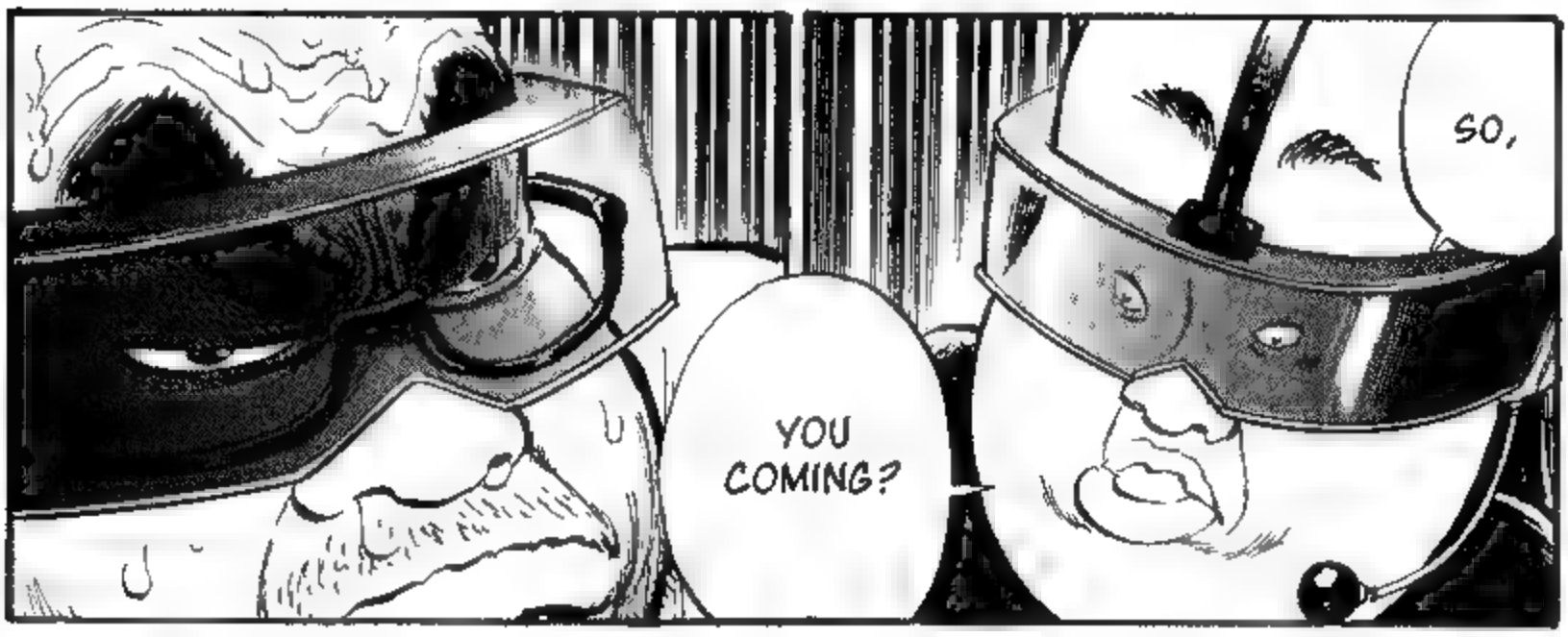
I DON'T JUGGLE FIVE CHICKS FOR NOTHIN'. REINHART'S WORD IS TRUTH, MY MAN.

YOU STILL HAVE A CHANCE, AND I MEAN IT.

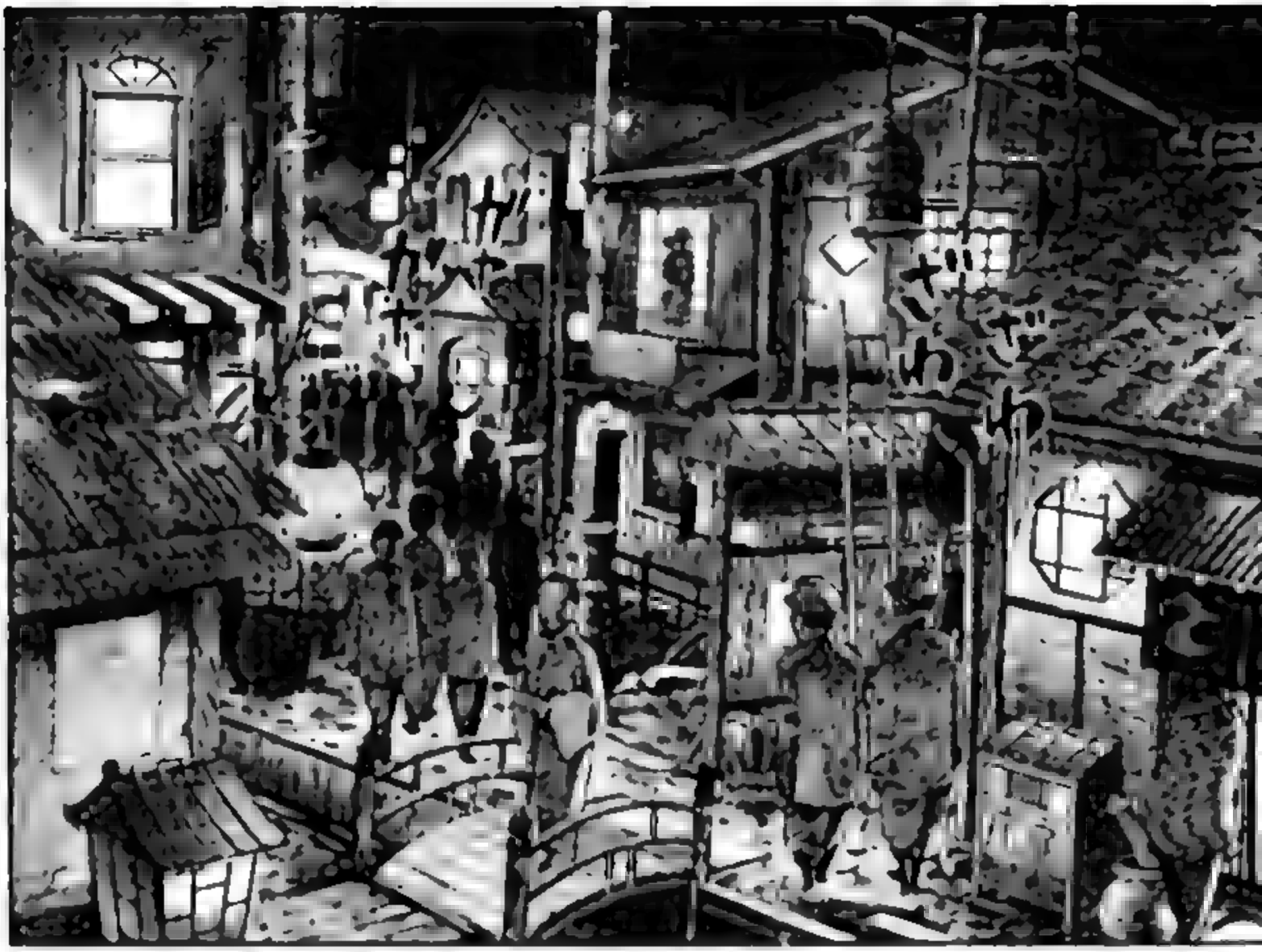
UMM, ECHIGO? I MEAN, MR. REINHART?

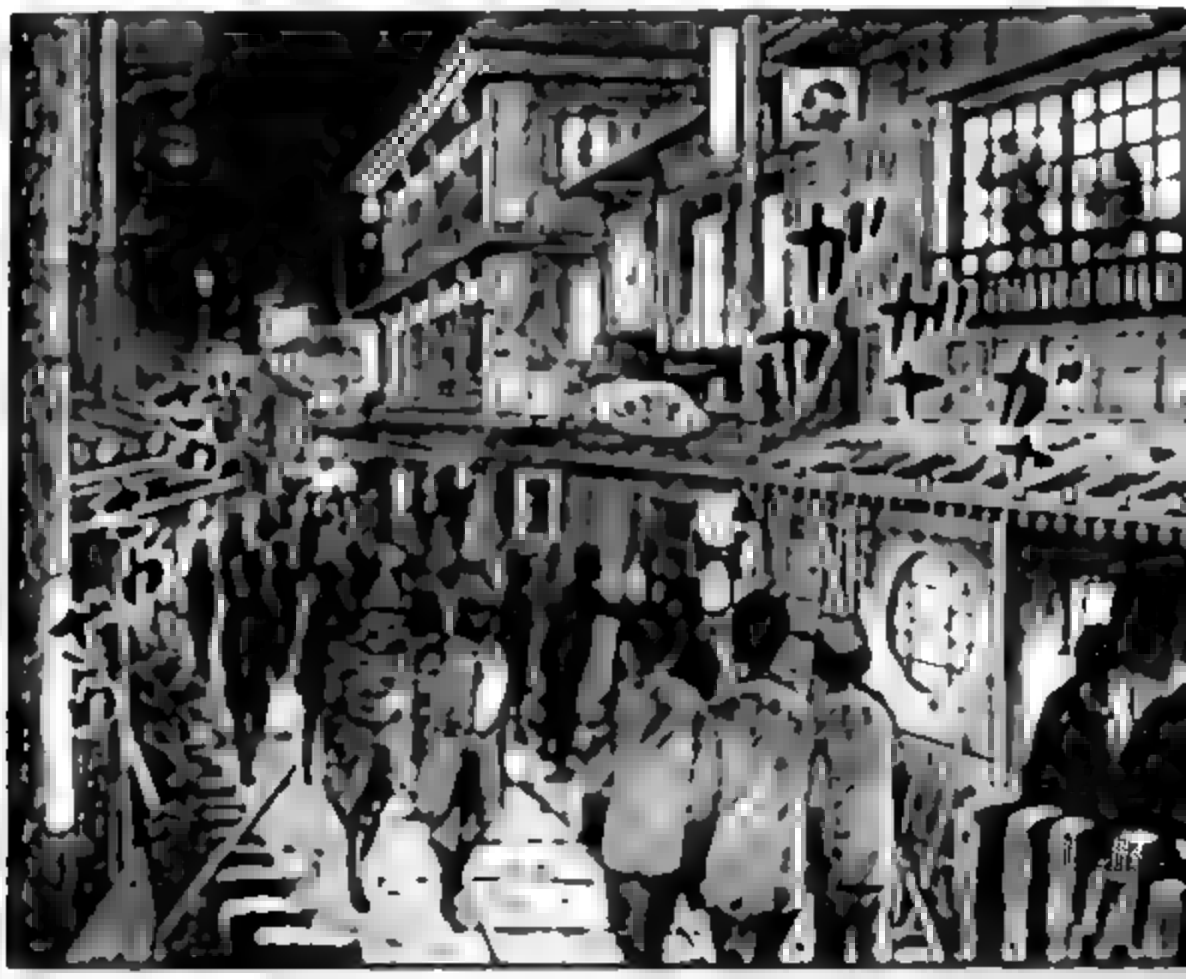
CAN I TAKE YOUR WORD ON THAT ...?


THERE ARE WORSE THINGS THAT COULD HAPPEN TO HER OUT THERE THAN KANZAKI.
LIKE I TOLD YOU, IT'S A DANGEROUS WORLD OUT THERE.
EITHER WAY, LETTING HER GO INTO TOWN ON HER OWN WAS A MISTAKE.


YOU COMING?
SO,

I'M COMING !!
BOOM BOOM
I'M COMIIIING !!!





I WONDER WHERE THEY'RE ALL GOING?

SO MANY PEOPLE!

GRRRG

SIGH

I'M REALLY HUNGRY.

I WONDER WHERE EVERYONE WENT.

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だだ だだ

たか たか

そろ そろ

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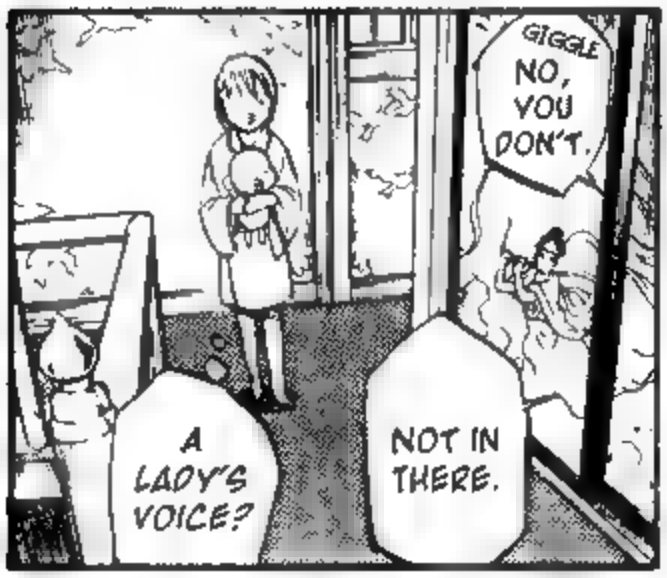
ACK!

WEEEEEEE EEEEEEEEE

ルサンチマン2

ズズ…

INDEED.
WENCHING IS CLEANSING OF THE SPIRIT.


GIGGLE
NO, YOU DON'T.
A LADY'S VOICE?
NOT IN THERE.

ス
?

?
SNIFF SNIFF
WHAT'S THAT SMELL? ...CHESTNUT FLOWERS?

WHAT'S EVERYONE DOING, MR. MOB?

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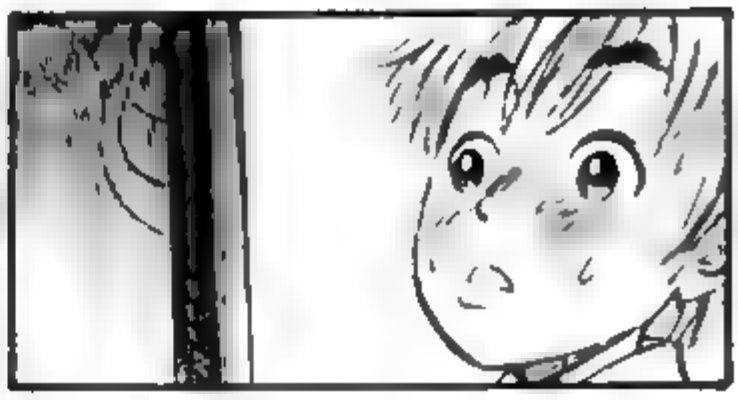
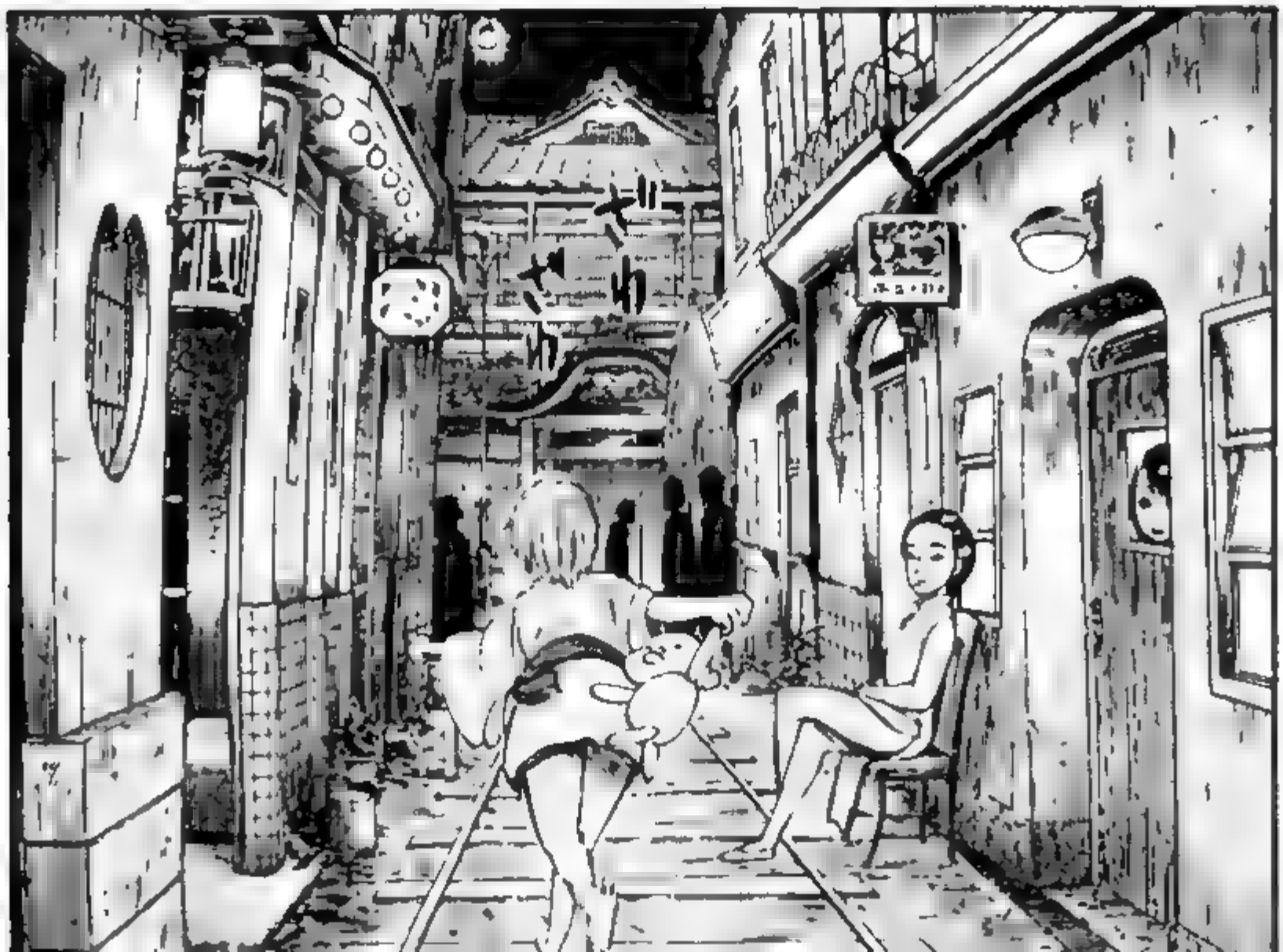
!!





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JUST STRADDLE THEM LIKE NORMAL.

HOW DO YOU RIDE THESE THINGS?

HEY, WAIT.

GRRR.

I WANT TO GO, TOO.

YES, MASTER.

I'M SORRY FOR LEAVING THE ESTATE SO LATE, KAREN. YOU'RE IN CHARGE.

Y-YEAH, GOT IT.

MAKE SURE YOU FIND TSUKIKO, TAKURO. GOT THAT?

YOU CAN'T.

I-I'M ON THE CASE!!

CHAPTER 15: FACE THE MOON

HIYAH!!

HIYAH!!

C'MON, TAKURO, YOU HAVE TO SHOUT!!!

HUH?

UHH, O-OKAY.

G-GIDDYUP HORSEY...

YOU SPOTTED KANZAKI AROUND SHAMOJI PARK, IS THAT RIGHT?

Y, YEAH.

WHAT I DIDN'T MENTION BEFORE IS THAT THAT NEIGHBOR-HOOD IS THE BIGGEST BROTHEL AREA IN NOSTALGIA.

IT'S A DANGER-OUS PLACE FOR HER.

B-BROTHELS?

WHY WOULD THOSE BE THERE?

LOTS OF REASONS.

SOME PLACES TAKE GIRLS WHO HAVE BEEN KIDNAPPED BY WICKED PLAYERS, SOME ARE RUN BY SOFTWARE COMPANIES THEMSELVES. BUT MOST OF THE GIRLS...

...WERE SIMPLY LEFT BEHIND BY PLAYERS WHO GREW TIRED OF THEM.

I,

I JUST...

IRONIC, THAT IT SHOULD NOW BE TSUKIKO WHO JOINS THEIR NUMBER.

I ONLY WANTED TSUKIKO

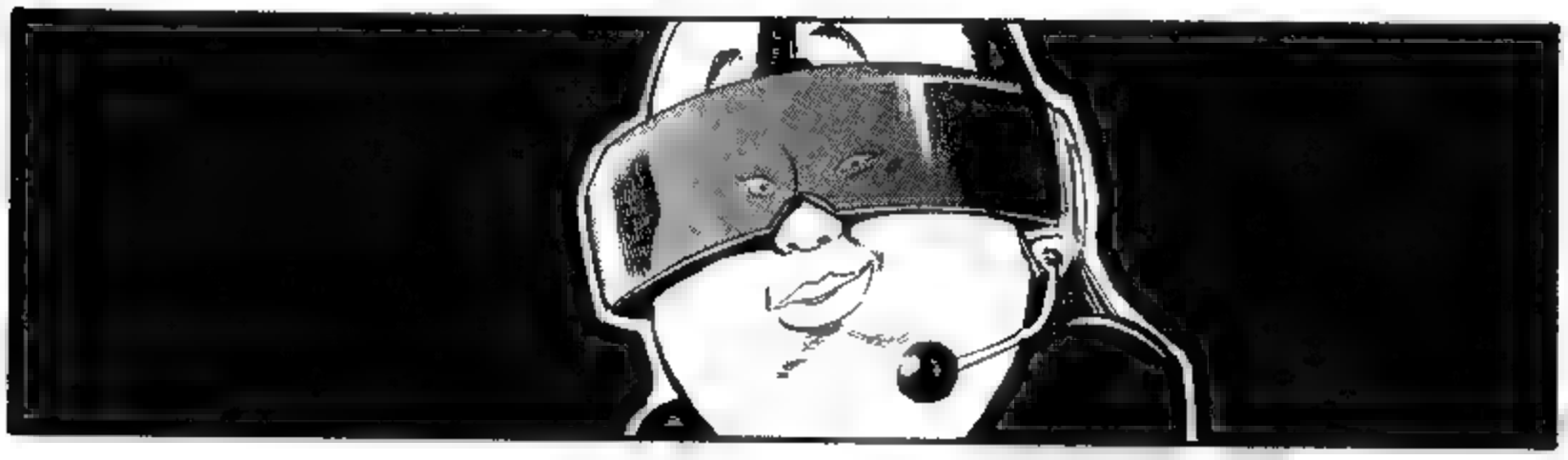
TO BE HAPPY...

DO YOU THINK TSUKIKO'S STILL ALL RIGHT?

AND, IT'S...

IT'S ALREADY BEEN THREE DAYS.

ズズ…



TAKE A LOOK, TAKURO.

HUH?

LIGHTS OUR PATH BELOW...

THE FULL MOON ABOVE...

HIDE BEHIND YOUR HORSE!!

PKS!!!

HUH?

7

WHAT?!

I... I NEVER REALIZED WHAT A GOOD PAL YOU ARE. I ALWAYS THOUGHT YOU WERE JUST SOME IRRITABLE LITTLE MIDGET.

6

IT TOOK YOU THAT LONG TO...

DON'T WORRY.

TSUKIKO WILL COME BACK TO YOU. YOU HAVE MY WORD.

WHAT?!

WHAT'S GOING ON, HERE?!

GET DOWN, TAKURO! YOU DON'T WANT TO DIE!

!

THEY'RE PLAYER KILLERS! THEY'RE TRYING TO KILL US.

WHAAAT?!

WHAT'S THAT?

YOU WANT A ONE-ON-ONE FIGHT, EH?!

!

WHY WOULD THEY DO SOME-THING LIKE THAT?

DIDN'T I TELL YOU THAT ALL THE ONLINE GAMES ARE INTEGRATED, NOW?

IT SEEMS WE MUST DO BATTLE. STAY DOWN, TAKURO.

R-REIN-HART, NO!

EIIII

IIIII

ARE YOU OKAY, REINHART?!

HMPH.

ガシャ

!!

WHAT THE?

AAAAAAHH!! REINHAAAART!!

10

THE PURSUIT ... IS RIGHT BEHIND ...
LET GO OF MY HAND, TAKURO.
MAKE IT, AND YOU'LL BE SAFE...
LOOK, THERE'S THE TOWN...
TSUKIKO'S IN YOUR HANDS, NOW...
DON'T YOU DO THIS, YOU IDIOT!!
DON'T YOU DARE DIE ON ME!!
R-
REIN-HARRRRT !!!

WEIRD. YOU AREN'T SUPPOSED TO BE ABLE TO LEAVE THE BUILDING.

?

I'M, I...

I'M TSUKIKO.

UMM, UH,

I'M KANZAKI. NICE TO MEET YOU...

I BET YOU ARE

IT'S A SMELL I LOVE, A SMELL I REMEMBER ...

BUT IT'S NOT THE SAME SMELL.

I CAN'T EXPLAIN. I'M SO HAPPY I FOUND YOU,

BUT I FEEL SO SAD...

WHO...

ARE YOU?

14

LISTEN TO ME.

I'M KANZAKI. NOTHIN' AND NOBODY ELSE.

SHUT UP. SAY THAT AGAIN,

AND I'LL ERASE YOU.

NO...

WHO ARE YOU?

WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?

ARE YOU?

W-

WHO...

LET'S GO CHECK.

OKAY.

MIYABI !!

TSUBAKI SAID SHE SAW A GIRL WITH WHITE HAIR NEAR THE BRIDGE!

DID YOU FIND HER?

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THAT COULD BE TSUKIKO !!

WHITE HAIR...

TSJKIKO

TSJKI-KO!

?

THE BRIDGE!!

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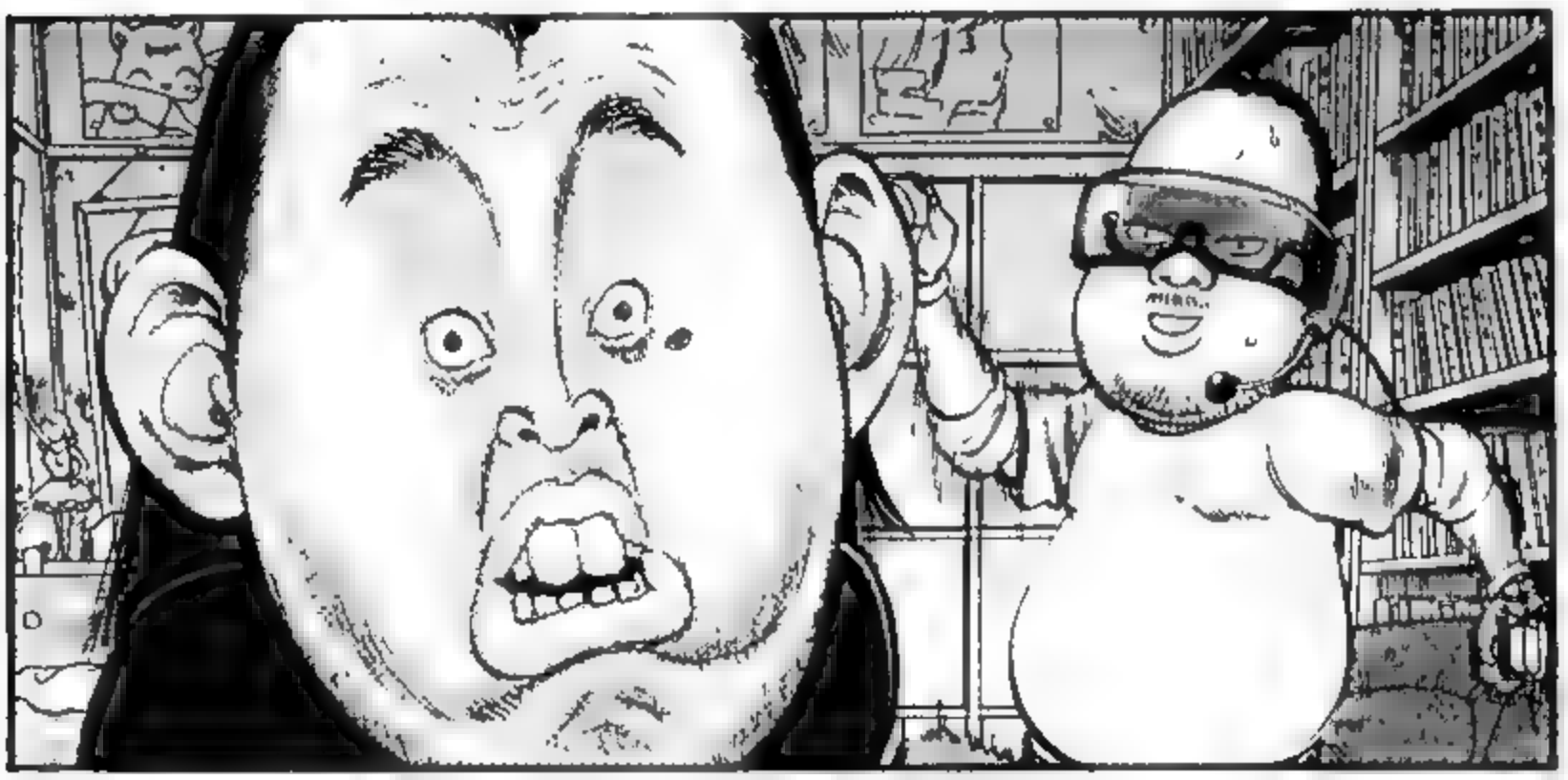

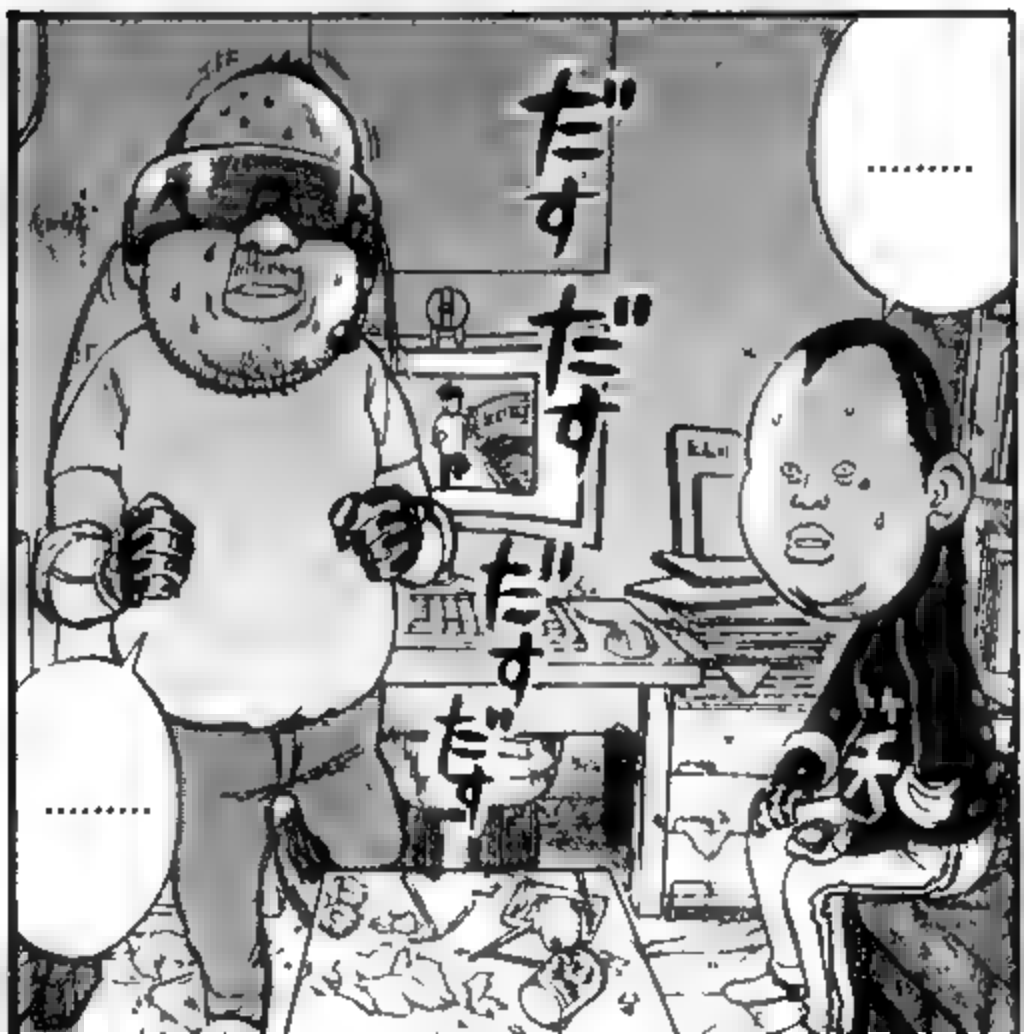
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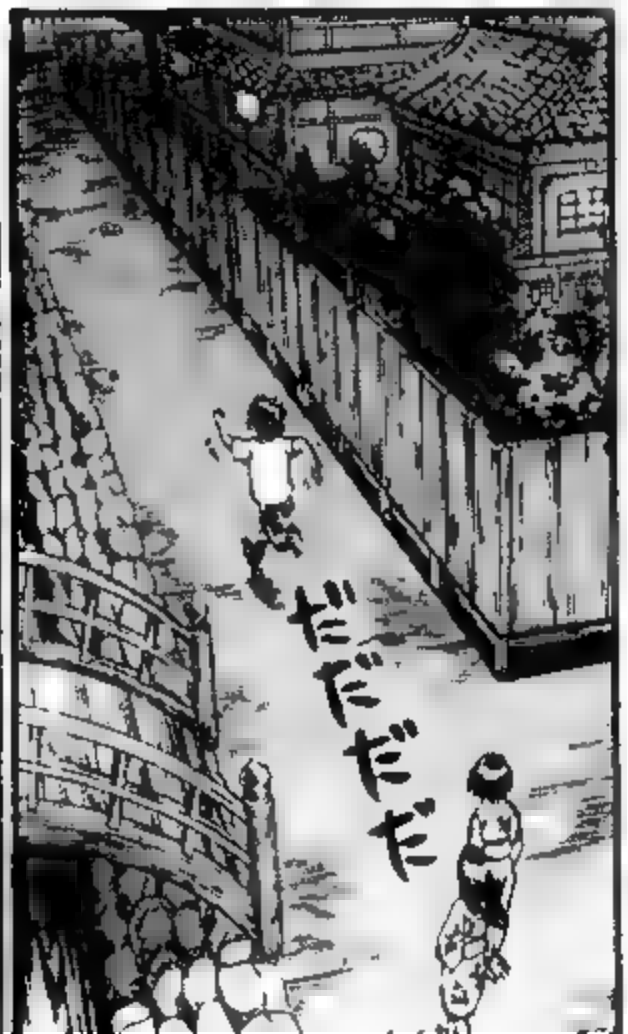
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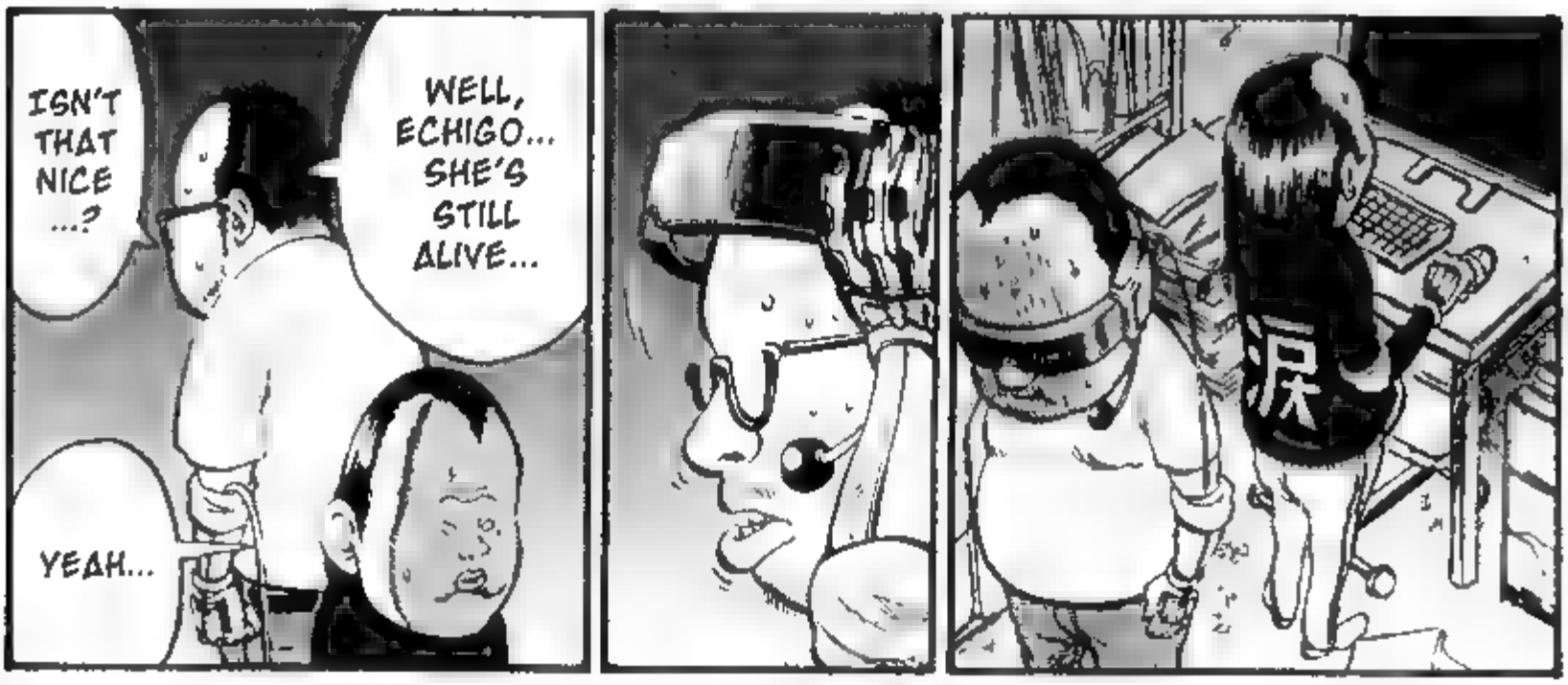
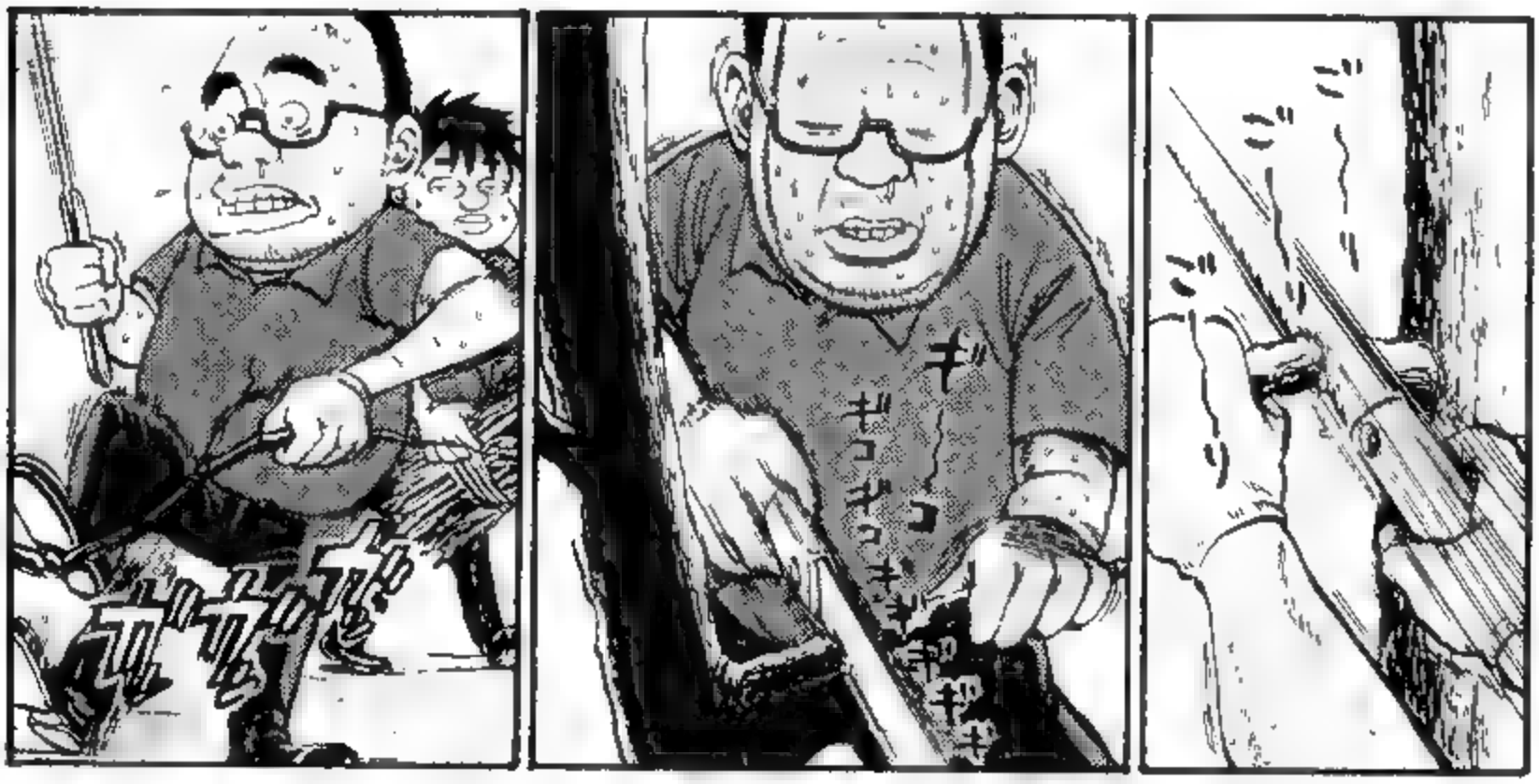
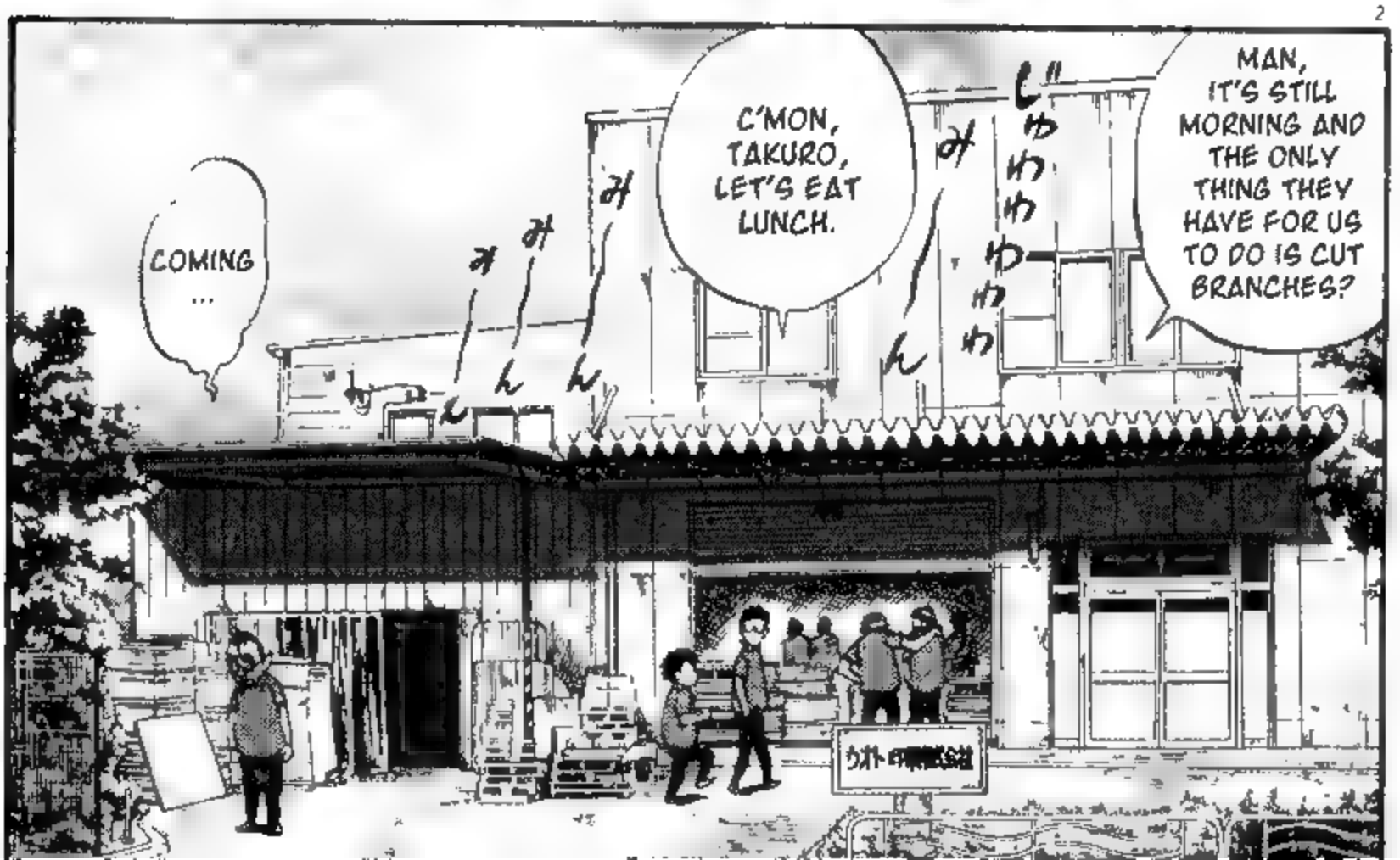
だず だず
I'M GONNA SHUT DOWN, NOW.
T-
TAKURO?


ISN'T THAT NICE ...?
WELL, ECHIGO... SHE'S STILL ALIVE...
YEAH...
涙

YEAH...
I FORGOT, I WORK ON SAT-URDAYS.
I SHOULD GET GOING...

CHAPTER 16: SONG OF LAMENT




COMING ...
C'MON, TAKURO, LET'S EAT LUNCH.
MAN, IT'S STILL MORNING AND THE ONLY THING THEY HAVE FOR US TO DO IS CUT BRANCHES?

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ポロッ
ポロッ
ポロッ

SORRY, YOU WANT IT BACK?
YOU DISGUS-TING PIG!!
HEY!
YUMMY NUMMY MEATBALL.
.....
THAT WAS MY MEAT-BALL!!
ポワッ

DAMMIT, I'M GONNA GO TELL ON YOU!!

BWA HA HA HA!

WHAT DOES THIS MAKE ME?

FUCK IT.

NO IDEA.

WHAT ARE WE DOING WITH THE BRAN-CHES?

I DIDN'T EVEN GET TO KISS HER!!!

SHIT, MAN,

SHIT, MAN,

I SPENT 600,000 YEN,

JUST SO I COULD PLAY MATCH MAKER FOR SOME OTHER JERK?!

ACK!
JUST TOSS 'EM OUT, NAGAO.
THAT'S WHAT YOU CALLED ME HERE TO DO?!
WHAT'S WITH THE BRAN-CHES?
WE DIDN'T HAVE ANYTHING ELSE TO DO.
IT WAS THAT GUY IN THE FAT SUIT, MS. NAGAO.
SAKAMOTO, YOU REALLY HAVE A THING FOR PICKING ON THE WEAK, DON'T YOU?
BUH-HACK!
EXCUSE ME?!
HA HA HA, YOU TELL 'EM.
YOU HELP HER, SAKAMOTO. MAYBE YOU TWO LOSERS CAN COMMISERATE.
HUH HUH HUH
.....

Car: Woto Printing

I COULD TAKE THEM TO COURT FOR HARASSMENT!
DAMMIT, THOSE WRINKLED OLD SHITS.
H-HUH...

ER, AHEM, C-CAN I OPEN A WINDOW?

TH-

THANKS.

C'MON, I'M JUST MESSIN' WITH YA.

POP

HELL NO. IT'S HOT!

RIGHT, OF COURSE ...

W-WELL, NO,

NOT EXACTLY.

OH, SORRY.

WHAT?

UM,

UHH!

STILL ALL BROKEN-HEARTED?

TSUKIKO, RIGHT?

WHERE'D YOU MEET HER, HUH?

WHA-?

THAT TSUKIKO'S JUST A CHARACTER IN A GAME THAT I BOUGHT AT THE STORE?

WHAT AM I GONNA TELL HER? THE TRUTH?

14 OR 15?!

I'LL GET IT! PLEASE, CONCENTRATE ON DRIVING!

OH JESUS, I DROPPED MY CIGARETTE.

HOW OLD IS SHE?

UMMM, I DUNNO. 14, 15?

H-HOW OLD?

7

WHAT WAS SHE LIKE?

HUH?

O-OR WAS SHE YOUNGER? MIGHT BE 12 OR 13.

OR IS IT ONE OF THOSE OLD-FASHIONED "PAID DATING WITH PRIVILEGES" THING?

IS HE JOKING?

SHE'S CALMING TO BE AROUND ...
AND OF COURSE, SHE'S CUTE, AND NICE, AND SWEET, AND,
HMM, WELL, LET'S SEE...

AND... AND... SHE WAS TOO GOOD FOR ME.

I'M GONNA LET YOU IN ON A SECRET. YOU ONLY SAW THE OUTSIDE PART.

THOSE KIND OF GIRLS ALWAYS HAVE A DARK SIDE. A REAL FILTHY, DISGUSTING SIDE.

ALL RIGHT, SAKA-MOTO.

OH, WHAT THE HELL, THEY BUILT ANOTHER LOVE HOTEL?

NOT EVEN LISTENING.

B-BECAUSE SHE WAS ALREADY IN LOVE WITH THIS OTHER GUY...

BAHAHA! SEE WHAT I MEAN?!

W-WELL, THAT WOULD BE...

HOTEL BARON

T-THAT'S NOT TRUE. NOT ABOUT TSUKIKO, AT LEAST.

WHY'D YOU SPLIT UP, THEN?

9

WE DID LOTS OF STUFF TOGETHER. THEN WE WERE ON A DATE...

WELL, UM,

.....

ウオト

600,000... HOLY SHIT.

HOW MUCH DID YOU SINK INTO HER?

SINK?

MONEY, CHUMP!

A-ABOUT 600K.

AND SHE JUST RAN INTO THE GUY SHE WAS IN LOVE WITH...

MAN, PEOPLE GO TO THESE THINGS,

ON NORMAL WEEKDAYS, RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY...?

GOING OVER TO HIS SIDE.

AND SHE ENDED UP,

A-

A-

AND I,

I SAW THEM ON A BRIDGE,

AND I CHASED AFTER HER...

B-BUT I COULDN'T GET OVER HER,

.....

KISSING EACH OTHER!!

!?

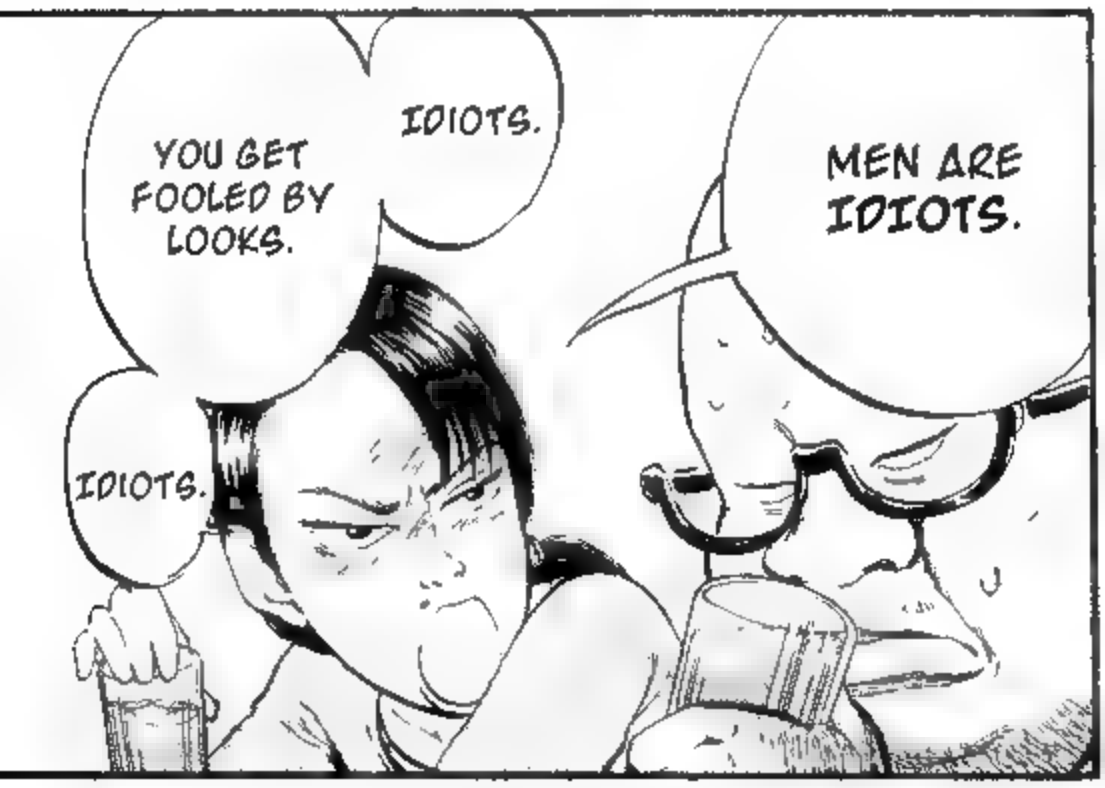
WELL, WE CAN DO THAT TOO!!!

HUH?!

THE FUCKING ASS-HOLE.

ON THE COM-PANY DIME!

Signs. Chinese Cuisine



B-BUT... WE'RE STILL WORKING.
HE ONLY TOOK ME OUT ONCE A MONTH, IF I WAS LUCKY! C'MON, KEEP DRINKING
WHAT?! WHAT EXACTLY ARE YOU WORKING ON?!

THUGIGO'TH A GOO' GUWLLL.

WHAT DO YOU CALL IT, THEN? YOU SPENT 600,000 YEN ON HER,

AND SHE LEFT YOU FOR ANOTHER GUY. YOU'RE A SUCKER!

I...

I WASN'T FOOLED.

THAT'S WHAT THEY'RE DOING ABOUT YOU!!

NO,

YOU KNOW WHAT SHE AND CASANOVA ARE DOING?

THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT YOU, AND LAUGHING AT YOU.

I DON'T GET IT!

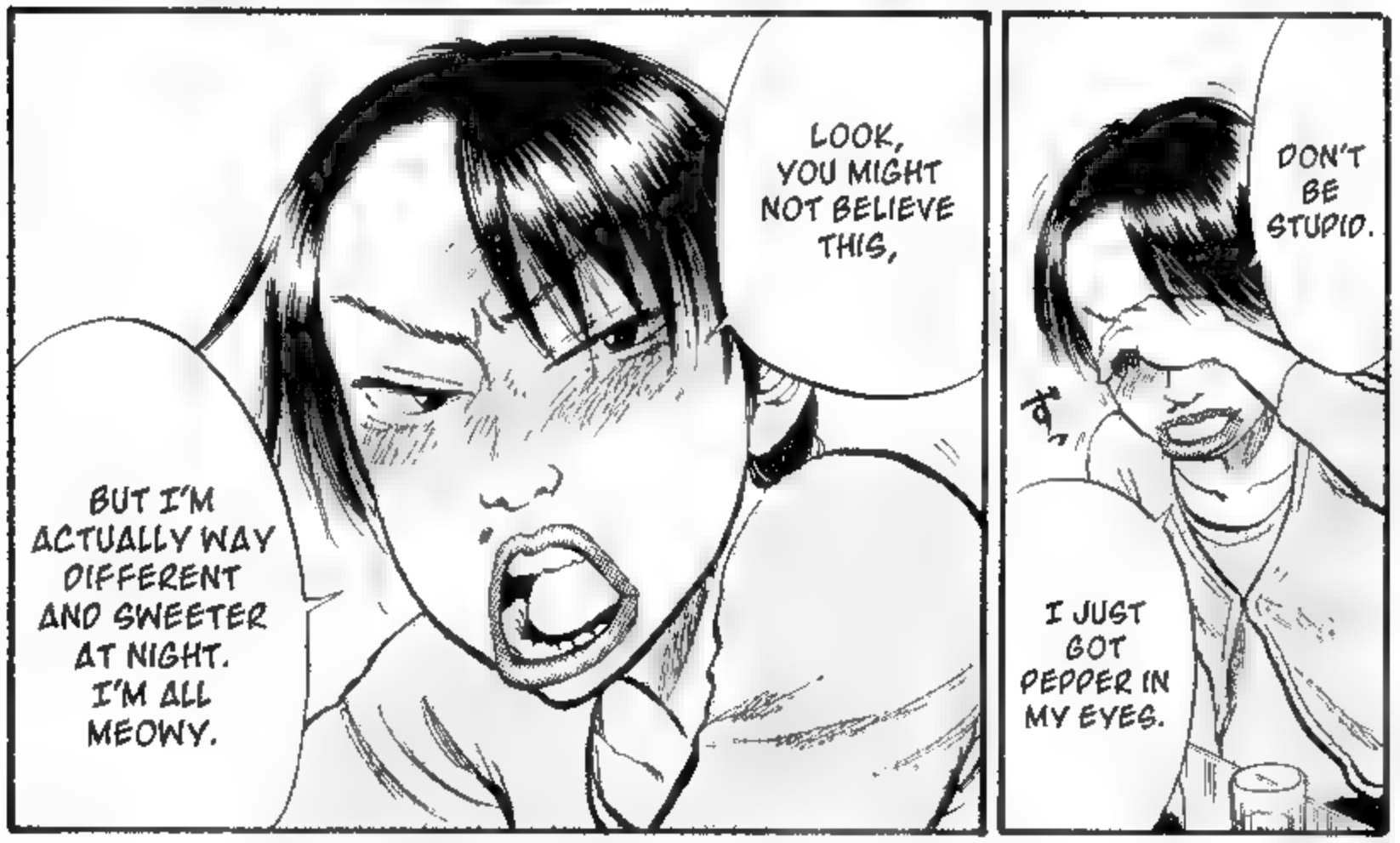
WHY DO YOU STILL TAKE HER SIDE?

13

I MEAN, I...

UH,

I ONLY MEANT ...
UH,
I'M S-SORRY!


LOOK, YOU MIGHT NOT BELIEVE THIS,
BUT I'M ACTUALLY WAY DIFFERENT AND SWEETER AT NIGHT. I'M ALL MEOWY.
DON'T BE STUPID.
I JUST GOT PEPPER IN MY EYES.

YOU HEARD THAT?
WHAT DOES "MEOWY" MEAN, MISS?
SHOW US.
REALLY
MEOWY ?
COME AGAIN?

おおっ

NYOW?

LET ME SEE, TOO!

MROWWWW.

ふら

ふら

PURRFECTLY FINE!

UH, CAN YOU STILL DRIVE?

WAHAHAHA, YOU'RE ALL SCARED I'LL CRASH.

I'LL GET IT, I'LL GET IT! FOCUS ON DRIVING!

OH, SHIT.

DROPPED MY CIGARETTE.

OH!

WELLLL?

SORRY, MUST BE FURTHER DOWN.

FIND IT?

H-HANG ON, NOT YET.

AHAAA!

IT MUST BE BECAUSE YOU LIKE ME!

YOU PIG!

YOU SICKO!

I WOULDN'T TRY TO DO THAT.

ARE YOU TRYING TO LOOK UP MY SKIRT?

HEY!

N-NO, I'M NOT!

HUH?!

I-I DIDN'T MEAN TO-

YOU WERE TEASING ME TOO MUCH...

?

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

WH-

YOU DON'T HAVE TO GET ALL ANGRY.

I... I *HATE* WOMEN WHO SMOKE!!!

AAAAHH !!!

AAACK !!!

SNIFF SNIFF

.....?

コイン洗車

ギャギャギャギャ

THE CAR WASH!!

I'M ON IT!!

COFF COFF

もも

AAAH! WATER, WATER!!

W-WHAT SHOULD I DO?!

17

OPEN THE HATCH !!

H-HERE WE GO!

カリ

ONE, TWO, THREE...

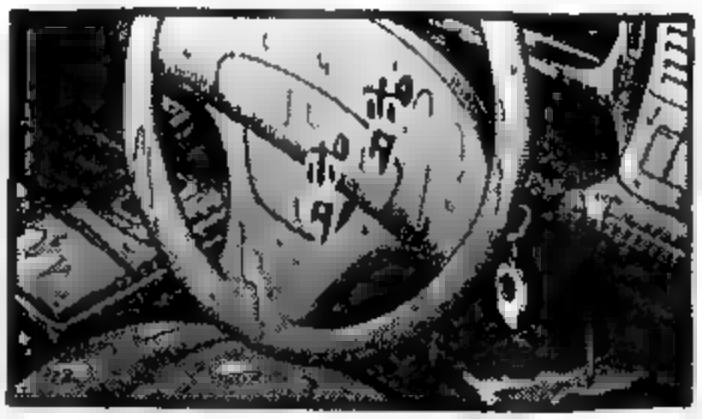
HURRY UP WITH THE MONEY!!

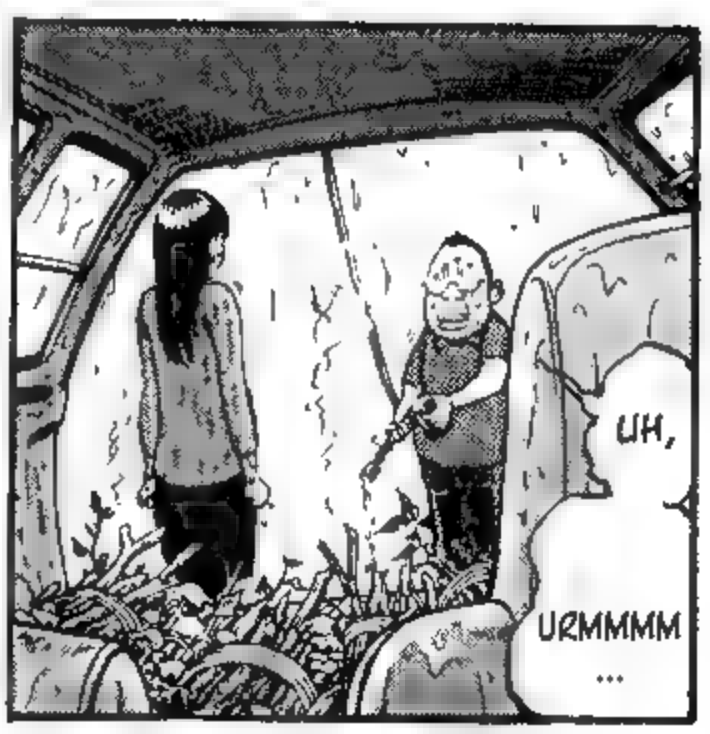
ちゃりん ちゃりん

YES MA' AAAM!

ドサッ

印刷




UH,
URMMMM
...

I P-
PROMISE
...

I W-W-
WON'T
S-
SMOKE
ANY-
MORE...

I-

I'M
SORRY
...

I-

IF IT
WILL
SUFFICE
!!

SAKA-
MOTO,

CAN I
USE YOUR
BACK FOR
A SEC?

DON'T LOOK
AT ME,
THIS IS
SHAMEFUL.

Y-
YES'M!

I CAN'T EVEN
REACH ALL THE
WAY AROUND...

...HA HA.

S-

SORRY
ABOUT
THAT...

CHAPTER 17: MIKAZUKI

ムキュウ

!?

HEY!

YOU DON'T GET TO SLEEP ALL DAY, MIKAZUKI!

Note: Mikazuki = crescent moon

2

WE'RE OPENING SOON, SO YOU NEED TO BE DOWNSTAIRS AND READY.

WASH YOUR FACE AND SNAP OUT OF IT.

OKAY... OUCHIE.

IS THAT MY NAME?

IT MUST BE.

.....

MIKAZUKI ?

.....

?

I'M HUNGRY ...

WELL,

WORKS FOR ME.

C'MON, HURRY UP.

YOH...?

YOH'S FIGHTING AGAIN.

OH! MIKAZUKI!

WHAT?

DON'T WORRY, YOH'S GOING TO WIN, OF COURSE.

HEY, THEY'VE GOT WEAPONS! NO FAIR!

HOW'S HE DOING?!

THEY HAVEN'T STARTED, YET.

4

YOU SCURRED OF OUR SWORDS?

HEY, WHYNCHA SAY SOMETHIN'

YOH'S THE BODYGUARD OF THIS NEIGHBOR-HOOD.

HE PROTECTS US FROM BAD PEOPLE.

YOH...?

WHO?

YOU GUYS NEVER LEARN, DO YOU?

YOU'D BE TREATED LIKE KINGS IF YOU JUST PAID YOUR MONEY LIKE THE OTHER CUSTOMERS.

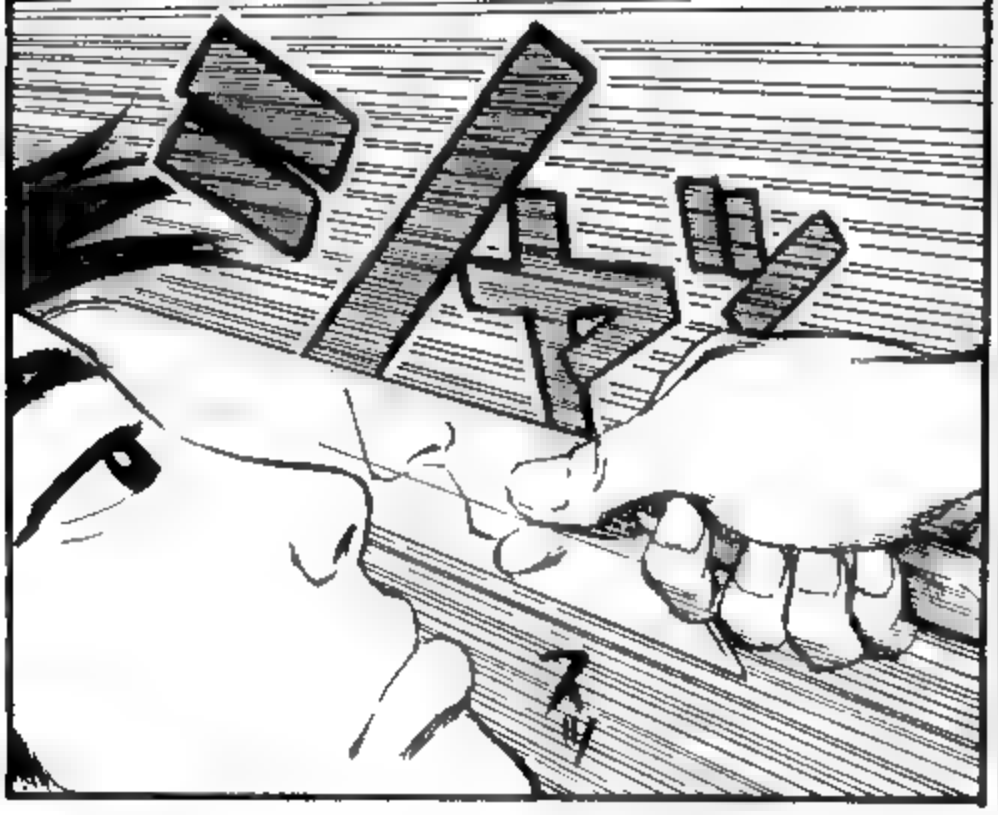
WHAT MADE YOU THIS ANGRY? THAT NOT EVEN THE ONLINE WOMEN CARE ABOUT YOU?

YOU LITTLE VIRGINS.

SHUT THE FUCK UP!

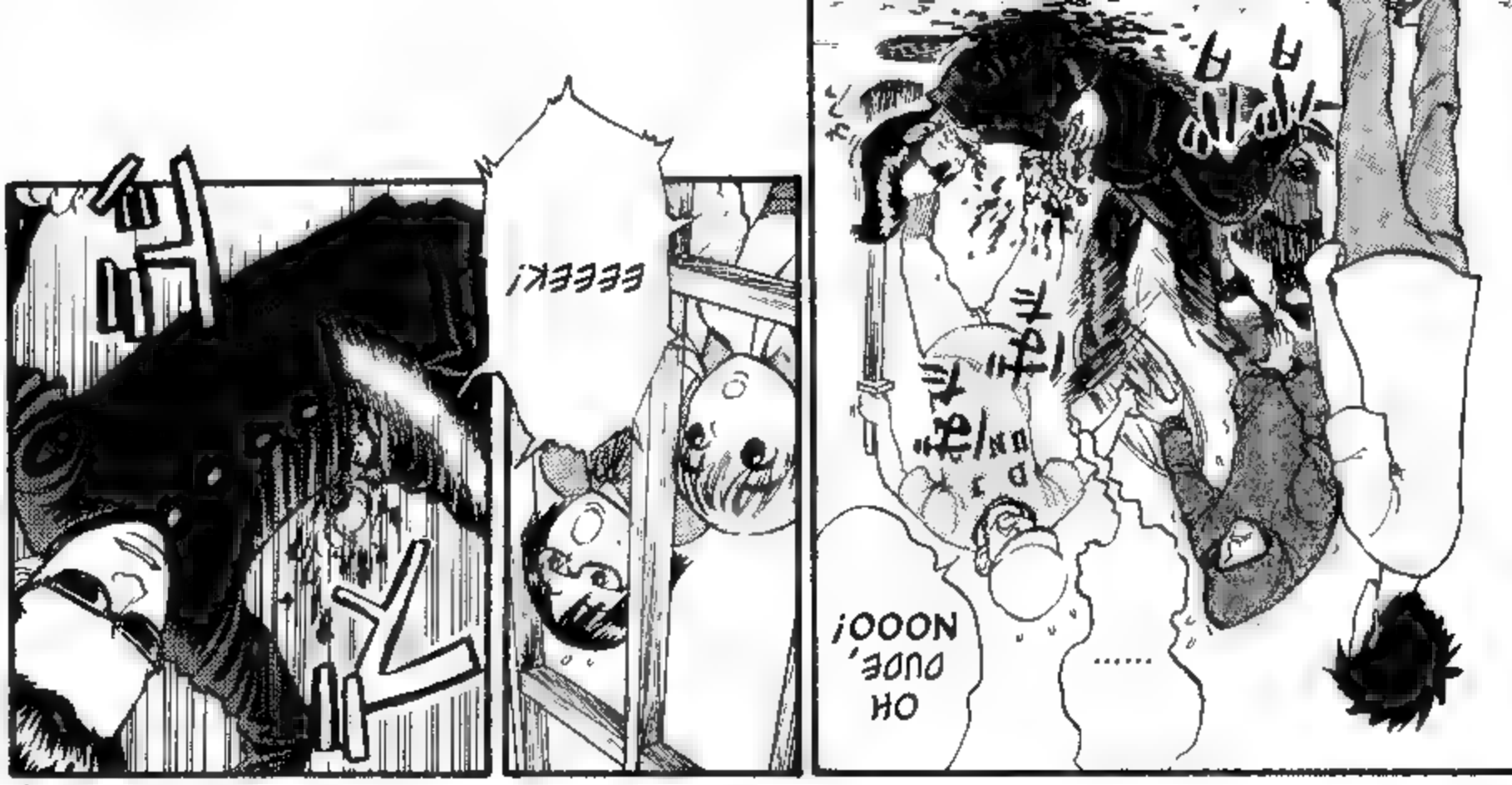
WE DON'T *CARE* ABOUT THE WOMEN! WE'RE JUST HERE TO FINALLY *KILL* YOU!

FREAKIN' *NPC!*

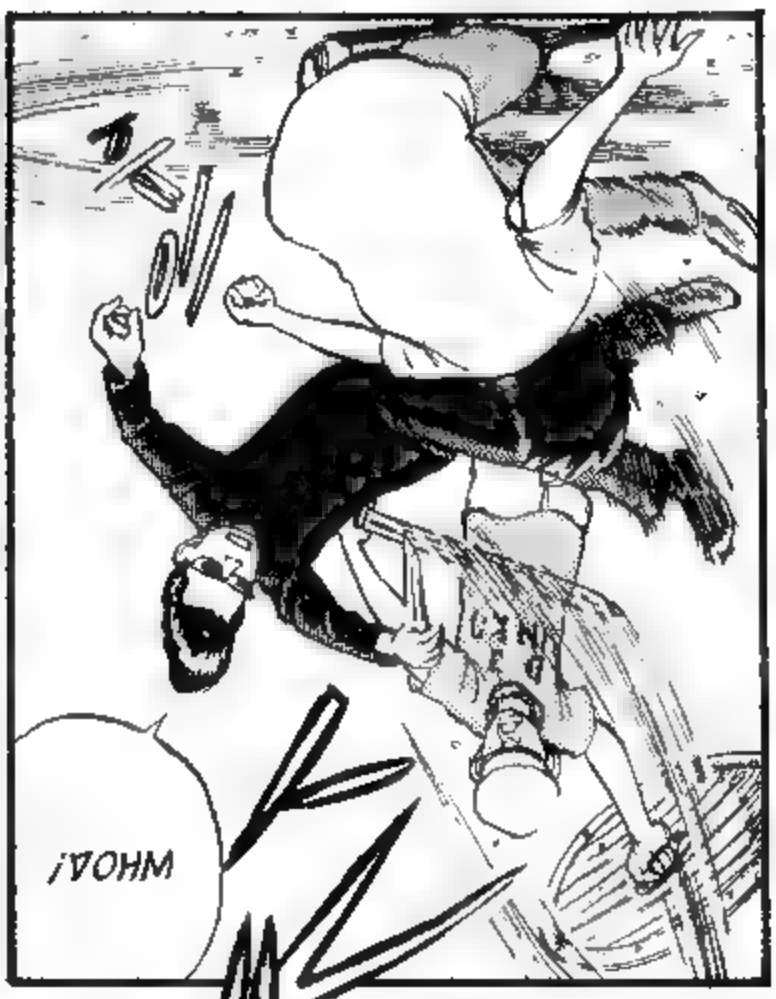


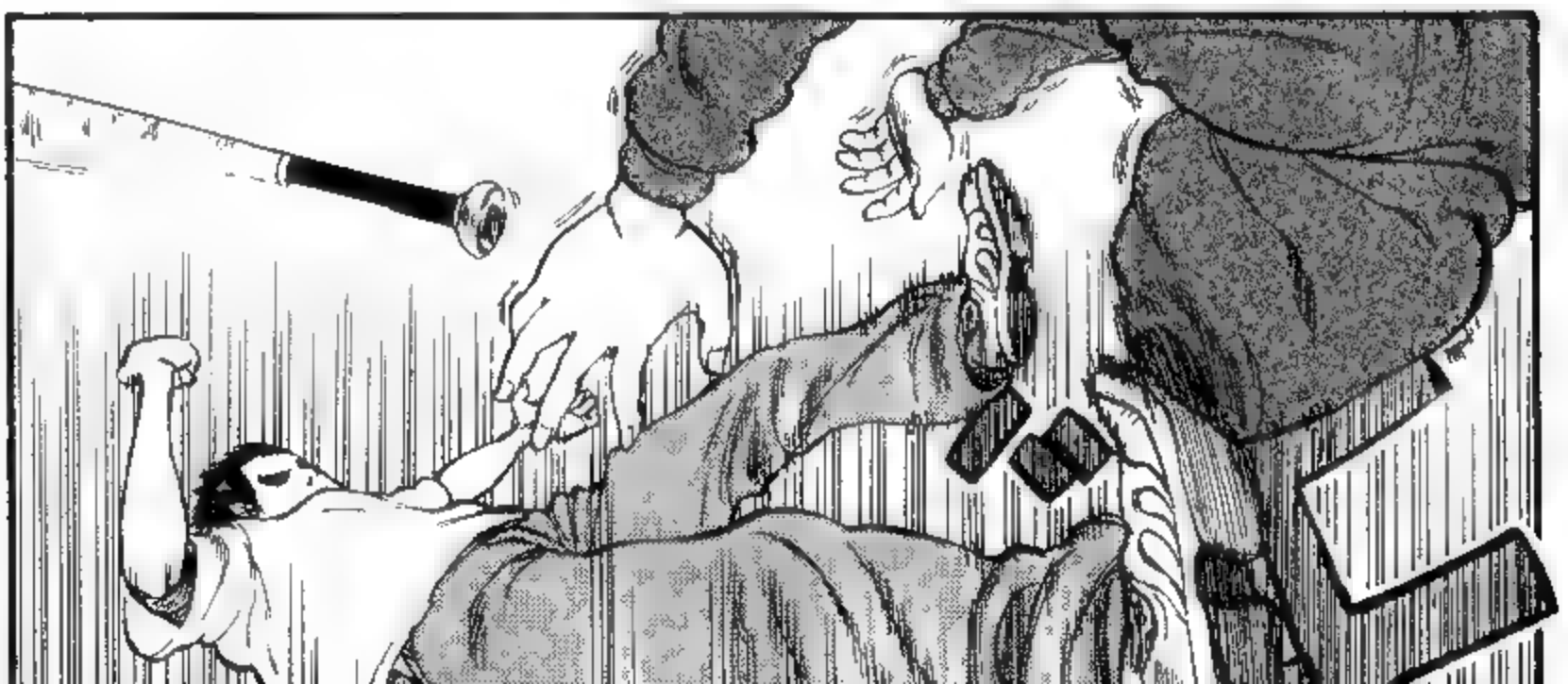
DJ
JNKO

!!
DJ
JNKO


OH DUDE, NOOO!
.....
EEEEK!

OLE!!


WHOA!



PK-ING IS FORBIDDEN IN THIS TOWN. IF YOU DON'T WANT TO GET SLAMMED BY THE GMS,

GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE, NOW.

WE'RE GONNA GITCHA! REMEMBER THAT!

YOU GOIN' DOWN, KANZAKI!

NAW, MAN, HE'S DEAD.

ASS-HOLE!

SHIT, NOW WE'LL HAVE TO REVIVE HIM AT THE CHURCH!

WE DON'T GET PENALIZED FOR KILLING NPCS LIKE YOU!

ずる ずる

トキ

KANZAKI...

YOH...

トキ

GOD, I HATE MIYABI.

CHECK-UPS?

WE HAVE TO HAVE OUR HEALTH CHECK-UPS NOW.

ALWAYS ON THE RAG ♡

THE DOCTOR CHECKS US TO MAKE SURE WE DON'T HAVE ANY GROSS DISEASES.

ぎゅう

QUIT WASTING TIME! COME ON!

OW OW OW!

COME ON, STOP HANGING OUT AFTER YOUR TEST. THERE'S WORK TO BE DONE!

THOSE GUYS ARE SO GROSS. THEY NEVER GIVE UP.

YOU AREN'T HURT, ARE YOU, YOH?

OH! YOH'S HERE.

OH!

WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

GO ON, INTRO-DUCE YOUR-SELF.

トキ トキ トキ

UM... OKAY!

WE HAVE A NEW GIRL, YOH.

ALL RIGHT...

WELL, YOU START WORK TONIGHT. HANG IN THERE.

MY NAME

IS MIKAZUKI.

WORK?

OKAY, SURE THING!

10

UMM, IT IS?

MIKAZUKI, IT'S YOUR TURN.

WELL, SEE YOU LATER.

I'M MIKAZUKI, MISTER. WHO ARE YOU?
TSUKIKO?

TSUKIKO, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
WHAT'S THIS?
YOU'VE SEEN A LOT OF USE!
SHUT UP!

SORRY, GOT THE WRONG PERSON.
NOTHING WRONG HERE. YOU'RE READY TO GO!

OH.
OKAY.

DID YOU TAMPER WITH HER MEMORY?
YEAH...

SHE CALLED ME A FAKE.

REALLY? SHE DID...?

DID YOU KNOW HER?

SHE DROPPED BY WITH HER OWNER NOT LONG AGO.

LOTTA EARLY-STAGE ERRORS. I COULDN'T FIGURE OUT THE PROBLEM, IN THE END.

EARLY-STAGE?

INJURING HER OWNER, SEEING INTO REAL LIFE...

SHE WAS EVEN IN LOVE WITH ANOTHER MAN FROM THE START.

OF COURSE, IT'S TRUE THAT A WHOLE LOT OF THOSE EARLY MODELS HAD PROBLEMS ...

BUT THREE AT ONCE? I DON'T THINK SO.

YOU THINK...

...SHE'S MOON?

THAT'S BECAUSE THEY'RE ALL COPIES OF MOON.

WHY ARE YOU LOOKING FOR HER, ANYWAY? WHAT WILL YOU DO?

HAH! YOU INVENTED HER! IF YOU CAN'T TELL, HOW CAN I?

I DUNNO. THEY ALL LOOK THE SAME TO ME.

IT'S IMPOS-SIBLE.

YOUR BODY WAS CREMATED. YOU'RE NOTHING BUT ASH UNDER THE GROUND.

WHA-

THAT'S CRAZY...

GO BACK TO REALITY.

WHY DON'T YOU JOIN HANDS WITH ME, AND RULE THIS WORLD?

I'VE ASKED YOU MANY TIMES.

YOU HAVE NO CHOICE

BUT TO LIVE IN THIS WORLD.

I WISH I COULD EAT YOUR CRAPPY FRIED RICE AGAIN.

YOU CREATED IT. YOU HAVE THAT RIGHT.

HEY.

I'M GOING TO BE KICKED OUT OF THE COMPANY SOON ENOUGH...

EXCEPT FOR ME.

NOBODY REALLY BELIEVES I'M KANZAKI.

WELL, JUST THINK ABOUT IT. DON'T STAND OUT ANY HARDER, KANZAKI.

MAYBE IF YOU OPEN HER UP, WE'LL LEARN SOMETHING.

OH, AND BY THE WAY, SHE'S A VIRGIN.

THIS IS YOUR ROOM NOW.

No drugs allowed

WH-

WHAT ?!

I KNEW YOU WERE A REALLY NICE PERSON WHEN I FIRST MET YOU!

THANKS, MIYABI!

MAKE SURE YOU KEEP IT CLEAN. YOU'LL BE HAVING GUESTS IN HERE.

WOW, THIS IS MINE?

YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT I'M LIKE!

OH, SHUT UP!

ズカズカズカ

IT LOOKS LIKE A BOAT.

No drugs allowed

?

A WARM BED TO SLEEP IN...

NICE HOT MEALS,

IS IT RIGHT FOR ONE GIRL TO BE SO HAPPY?

ばふっ

16

YES?

?

KNOCK KNOCK

HMM, WHATEVER.

TA DO SEM WITTA VOIGIN...

I-I ALWAYS WANNID...

キュー

ブルブル

キュー

ポタ

ポタ

17

AHA,

FOUND IT! FINALLY.

HYO HYO HYO!

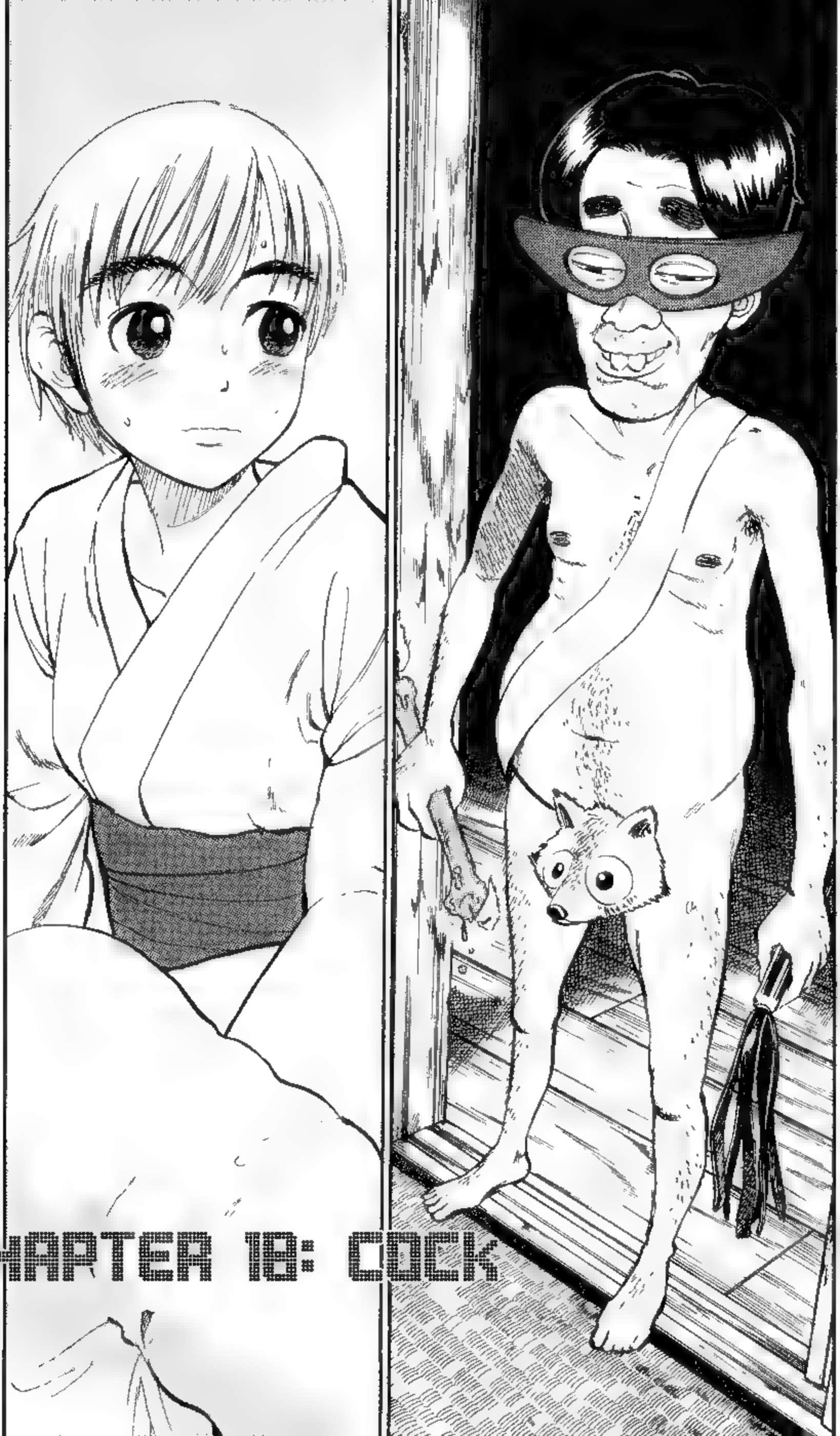
THERE'S NAGAO...

05 Uoto Printing Hiring Class

"S-

SOWWY ABOUT DAT!"

"I CAN'T EVEN REACH ALL THE WAY AROUND."



CHAPTER 18: CRACK

THIS TANUKI, "COCK," IS A VERY SPECIAL PET OF MINE. HE'S ALMOST LIKE A SON.

HE WAS IN AN ACCIDENT RECENTLY, AND THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE HIM WAS TO ATTACH HIM TO MY BODY.

ニヤ

WELL, YOU SEE,

しょぼん

UH, M-MISTER,

WHY DO YOU HAVE A TANUKI THERE?

BUT,

AT LEAST HE'S ALIVE.

OH!

COCK, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

キュッ

OH NO!

YOU'RE SO BRAVE, HANGING DOWN HERE.

HE MIGHT HAVE CAUGHT A COLD. HE'S ALL NAKEY, OF COURSE.

キューン

キューン

ISN'T THAT NICE,

COCK?

DON'T BE SCARED.

トコトコ

HE LIKES IT.

ロックオン

GO ON, YOU CAN PET HIM.

G-

AREN'T YOU SWEET!

HEH.

ふひひひ

なで

なで

さすり

さすり

GOOD BOY. WHAT A GOOD BOY!

WELL, OKAY!

ムニュー

I DON'T KNOW

うぅ

R-REALLY?

IT'S OKAY, HE WANTS YOU TO...

G-

GO ON...

YOU CAN KISS HIM, IF YOU WANT

はぁはぁ

HEE HEE HEE! GEEZ, LITTLE GUY.

くすくす

YOU SURE SNEEZED A LOT!

WHUHHHH!

ブルヒュ

ブルルルル

ビクビクビクビク

ACK!

HUNGK!

H-

HOW DARE YOUUU!

DON'T LAUGH AT MEEE!

4

!?

!?

YEOWW!!

ITO

ITO

OUCH, THAT'S HOT!!

FORGET YOUR CHERRY, I'M GONNA FUCK YER ASS!!

NOW TAKE YOUR CLOTHES OFF AND OBEY THE MASTER'S ORDERS!

YOU LITTLE WHORE!!

HOW DARE YOU MAKE FUN OF ME!

I HAPPEN TO BE A LONG-LASTER IN BED!

POONANNY !!

SHOW ME YOUR

!?

EEYAAAGH!

IN YOUR BUTTHOLE !!

I'M GONNA STICK THIS CANDLE

!!!

?

?

SHE BIT MY HAAAAND !!

SHE-

COME HERE, MIKAZUKI.

I'M GONNA SUE YOU OUT OF BUSINESS !!

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!

OH, YOU POOR THING.

I'M SO VERY SORRY.

おろおろ

OH, NO!

6

THE CUSTOMER IS GOD!!!

UMM,

LET ME EXPLAIN,

MA'AM.

Y-YOU CAN STOP THAT NOW.

I-IT'S NOT RIGHT TO ABUSE WOMEN. MAKES ME SICK TO MY STOMACH.

I'M SORRY!

I'M SORRY!

OUCH!

HOW DARE YOU TREAT THE CUSTOMER THIS WAY!!

AAAAH!

YOU LITTLE BITCH !!

YOU HUSSY! ATTACKING A CUSTOMER! WE MAKE A LIVING SERVING THEM! WHAT IF WE'RE SHUT DOWN?!

I... I'M SORRY!

ビッ

ふう

YEAH.

I THINK I WILL!

PLEASE ACCEPT OUR APOLOGIES BY ENJOYING A THREESOME, ON THE HOUSE.

KNOCK IT OFF.

しっ

カ!!!

!

HURT HER ANY WORSE, AND SHE WON'T BE WORTH ANYTHING.

GOD-DAMNED LITTLE NPC!

I DON'T CARE IF THE CUSTOMERS KILL THE GIRLS! IT MEANS WE GET MONEY BACK!

AND I DON'T WANT YOU BOTHERING THE CUSTOMERS, UNLESS THEY'RE MAKING OFF WITH OUR PROPERTY!

THE BANDAGE FETISH IS ALWAYS A STRONG SELL.

AND WHEN DID YOU GET IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO INTERFERE WITH ME, KANZAKI?

HMPH.

OH, SHUT UP.

IF YOU KILL ONE OF THEM, I'LL KILL YOU, IN REAL LIFE.

IT'S YOUR JOB TO TRAIN THEM.

MAKE SURE THE LITTLE BRAT LEARNS THE ROPES.

TAKURO.

I'M SORRY FOR BITING YOU,

I'M SORRY

I'M SORRY.

YOU'LL GET USED TO LIFE HERE.

きゅっ

きゅっ

OOH, YEAH!

RIGHT THERE.

FORGET ABOUT WORK TONIGHT, AND GET SOME REST.

WHAT?

FROM WHOM?

I USED TO GET PIGGY-BACK RIDES ALL THE TIME.

...I DON'T KNOW.

IF IT'S EVER TOO HARD, JUST TELL ME.

I'LL DELETE YOU.

.....?

I REMEMBER THIS.

OKAY. THANKS.

YOU'RE REALLY NICE, YOH.

THEY'RE USING THE BIG ROOM FOR AN ORGY.

SLEEP IN HERE, TONIGHT.

FRIED RICE WITHOUT GREEN PEAS.

FRIED RICE.

WANT ANY-THING TO EAT?

HAH. NICE, AM I?

HANG ON, I'LL PUT IN AN ORDER

THANKS, YOH!

JUST LIKE ME.

JUST TELL US, ALREADY!

C'MON, TAKUROOO.

Uoto

W-WE'RE NOT REALLY

AT THAT STAGE YET! DON'T JUMP THE GUN!

SHE WAS SOAKING WET! DID YOU TAKE HER TO A HOTEL?

OH, STOP IT, YOU GUYS!

くる

くる

WHAT HAPPENED WITH YOU AND NAGAO, YESTERDAY?

ALL RIGHT TAKURO, YOU'RE UP TO BAT!

CAN SOMEONE GO AND GET IT FROM HER?

HUH?!

S-SHE'S SICK?!

HEY, FOLKS.

WHAT HAPPENED WITH NAGAO, YESTERDAY?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

WELL, SHE'S UNDER THE WEATHER. BUT SHE STILL HAS THE BLOCK COPY.

Toyama Shipping

ヒュ

DAMMIT, I'M SO STUPID!

SHE GOT SICK BECAUSE OF ME!

12

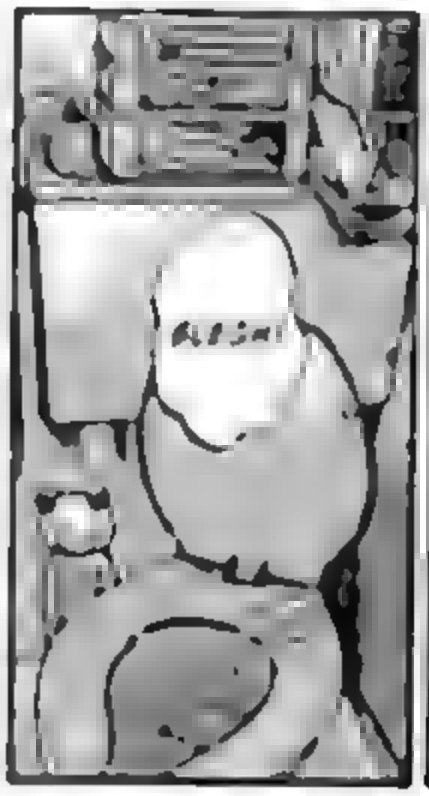
IF IT HAPPENS, IT HAPPENS!

I'M COMING FOR YOU, MS. NAGAO!

ヒュ

W-WAIT, THINK! WHAT IF SHE INVITES ME IN FOR TEA?

SHOULD I GO INTO HER APART-MENT?



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げぼっ
GOD, I FEEL LIKE SHIT. WHAT A HEADACHE ...
ハア
ハア
BEEP
BEEP
WHAT DID I EVEN DO, YESTER-DAY?
I HAVE A MESSAGE? AHH WELL.
I'M SO HUNG OVER AND FUCKED UP, I CAN'T REMEMBER.
おえ
37.2o
50 MEGA PIXEL
GONE DOWN A BIT.

I BET MY VAG STINKS, TOO.
MY HAIR STIIINKS!
NEED TO EAT SOME-THING...

OH,

HERE IT IS!

YOU HAVE REACHED YOUR DESTINATION.

I-I'M COOL, RIGHT? THE FACTORY CHIEF ALREADY CALLED TO WARN HER.

MOVE IN!

NEVER BEEN TO A REAL GIRL'S PLACE BEFORE ...

...

I MADE IT.

15

UGH, SHITTY DAY.

WAIT, WAS I SUPPOSED TO QUIT?

...AND ALL I BOUGHT WAS CIGA-RETTES.

HUH?

IS SHE NOT HERE?

Cake

IS SHE SLEEPING?

U-UM,

THE, FACTORY,

UMM, YEAH.

HELLO,

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

UM, SAKA-MOTO,

EEP!

Cake

WHY DO YOU KNOW MY AD-DRESS?

COUGH!
COUGH!
COUGH!
OKAY,
LOOK,
I MIGHT HAVE SAID SOME STUPID THINGS YESTERDAY WHEN I WAS DRUNK...
BUT...
IT WOULD BE, LIKE, PHYSIOLOGICALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO BE WITH YOU.
GOD,
DON'T BE SUCH A GROSS-ASS CREEP!!

ARE WE CLEAR ON THAT?

COFF. URGG.

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18

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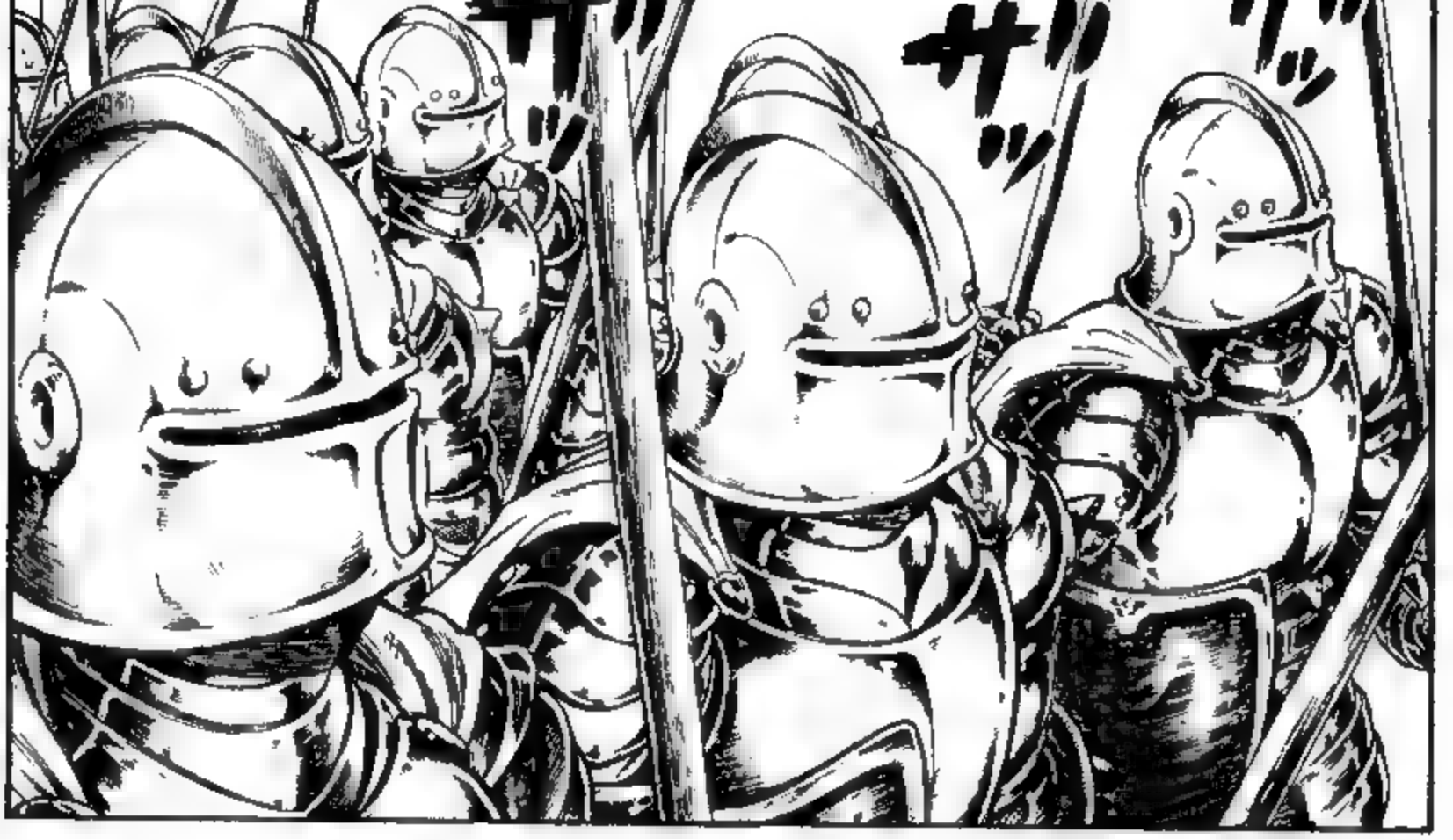
CHAPTER 19: MEMORY



2

YES.

HAS SOMETHING HAPPENED?

WE HAVEN'T SEEN YOU IN QUITE A WHILE, REINHART.

I'VE BEEN TEACHING A NOOB FRIEND OF MINE THE ROPES RECENTLY.

WHICH IS?

ANYWAYS, HAVE YOU HEARD THE BIG RUMOR?

I'D LIKE TO MEET HIM.

DON'T BUTTER ME UP.

AHH, I SEE. YOU MAKE A GOOD FRIEND, REINHART.

AFTER A BIT MORE HELP, MAYBE...

THEY SAY

THERE WILL BE A WAR SOON.

BIG BWUVVER, CAN I PLAY TOO?

SURE. RUN ALONG, NOW.

IN THE RED-LIGHT DISTRICT OF NOSTALGIA.

SHAMOJI PARK.

WHERE?

SHAMOJI...

PARK...?

4

THE FUHRER ...

THE FUHRER OF THE NINTH EMPIRE WILL LEAD THE ATTACK, HIMSELF.

THAT'S A MILITARY CLAN MADE UP PRIMARILY OF ACTION GAMERS.

CAN WE TRUST THE SOURCE?

IT'S COMING STRAIGHT FROM MY FRIEND IN THE "NINTH EMPIRE."

KANZAKI-HUNTING.

THE MOST DANGEROUS MAN IN THE UNREAL.

BUT IT SEEMS HIS REAL GOAL IS SOME-THING ELSE.

YES. HE SAYS HE MUST STRIKE A BLOW AGAINST IMMORALITY IN THE UNREAL BY ATTACKING THE RED-LIGHT DISTRICT.

HE'LL MOBILIZE AN ARMY TO HUNT FOR KANZAKI?

RIDICULOUS!

WELL, AS LONG AS IT DOESN'T END IN DISASTER ...

BUT IF HE'S AMASSING AN ENTIRE ARMY, IT MUST BE THE REAL KANZAKI.

KANZAKI'S JUST AN URBAN LEGEND!

IT'S TRUE. BUT THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE WHO CLAIM TO BE KANZAKI ONLINE.

YOU CAN BE FAMOUS BY CALLING YOURSELF KANZAKI, THOUGH OF COURSE, THAT COMES WITH MUCH DANGER.

UNREAL WORLD WAR III ...

WE'RE ALWAYS THE ONES WHO GET HURT THE MOST.

IF IT LEADS TO WAR, IT'S THE GIRL-GAME PLAYERS LIKE OURSELVES WHO PAY THE PRICE FIRST.

.....

THERE'S NO USE GETTING PESSIMISTIC BEFORE ANYTHING'S HAPPENED YET.

WE DON'T KNOW FOR SURE, BUT WE'D GUESS LARGE-SCALE ACTION WILL START FRIDAY NIGHT. IT ENSURES PLENTY OF SPECTATORS.

I SEE.

SOB

IF THIS WORLD GETS RUINED ONE MORE TIME...

DON'T JINX IT! THIS IS THE ONLY WORLD LEFT FOR US!

WHEN ARE THE ATTACKS GOING TO START?

TO PEACE.

TO PEACE.

じゅるじゅる

じゅるる

ブピピピッ

ブピピピッ

PARDON ME.

I NEED TO MAKE A PHONE CALL.

ぽつん

→Ichigo's shirt today: "idi" and "ot"←

DAMMIT!

WHY WON'T TAKURO ANSWER?

SHE'S IN TROUBLE!

POOR TSUKIKO...

みーんみーんみーんみーんみーん

WHEWWW, THAT WAS TIRING, YESTERDAY!

I'M FINE.

IS YOUR EYE OKAY? YOUR POOR CLOTHES GOT MESSED UP, TOO.

IT WAS A WHOLE BIG GROUP.

I'M STILL SORE.

I THOUGHT YOU WERE TOO LOOSE FOR THAT

OH, SHUT UP.

8

I WISH I COULD GET MARRIED, ALREADY!

MAR-RIED?

THAT MEAN OLD WITCH ALWAYS HITS US AND STUFF. OOH, I HATE HER!

IF YOU LEAVE, IT MEANS YOU CAN'T SEE YOICHIRO ANYMORE!

ARE YOU SURE?

OHH! ♡

I WANT TO TRAVEL AROUND THE WORLD.

AND THEN I'M FREE! I CAN GET OUT OF HERE.

IF A CUSTOMER LIKES ME ENOUGH, HE CAN BUY ME.

WHAT, YOU DIDN'T KNOW?

OHH, HMM.

I'D NEVER LET MYSELF BE SEPARATED FROM YOH!

I'M STAYING HERE FOREVER!

YOU WERE LISTENING? YOU SURE LIKE TO SPY

THAT'S THE BIGGEST PROBLEM WITH IT!

VERY GOOD POINT.

THERE'S JUST SOMETHING SO MUCH MORE SATISFYING ABOUT DOING IT WITH YOICHIRO

I'M LIKE, ALMOST THERE JUST FROM THE MOMENT HE HOLDS ME!

I WONDER WHY?

YEAH, HE'S WAY DIFFERENT FROM THE CUSTOMERS.

THOUGH IT FEELS GOOD WITH THEM, TOO

YOH'S JUST SPECIAL

WHATCHA TALKIN' ABOUT? DOIN' IT?

TRUE, NOBODY IS BETTER IN THE SACK THAN YOICHIRO

I-I'M NOT JUST TALKING ABOUT THE SEX!

EEEP!

WHAT?! YOU'RE A VIRGIN?!

DO YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN, MIKAZUKI?

I-I'VE NEVER DONE IT.

YEAH, IT'S SO STRANGE!

THERE'S JUST SOMETHING MORE REASSURING ABOUT BEING WITH YOH.

YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE A BABY AGAIN.

HE'LL HELP YOU FORGET THE BAD STUFF.

WHO CARES IF YOU'RE A VIRGIN?

HMPH!

BUT IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM, JUST ASK YOH

IT'S HARD THE FIRST TIME. THE CUSTOMERS ARE CLUMSY ...

WHY NOT? IT FEELS GOOD!

YOU'VE REALLY NEVER DONE IT?

N-NOPE ...

EEEEEK!

YOU RANG?

C'MON, GET READY FOR WORK.

THE OLD BITCH IS ON THE WARPATH.

YOU WERE LISTENING IN ON OUR CONVER-SATION!

NO! STOP THAT, YOH! ♡

YOH, YOU PERV!

SO? WHAT'S WRONG WITH BEING PERVY? IT'S YOUR FAULT FOR TALKING TOO LOUD!

WHAT'S WITH THE SLIP?

IS THAT YOURS?

TH-

THANKS FOR YES-TERDAY...

HELP MIKAZUKI OUT, YOH. SHE'S STILL A VIRGIN.

OKAAAY! ♡

OH, SHUT UP.

もじもじ

Y-YEAH, SOMEONE GAVE IT TO ME.

IT'S REALLY IMPOR-TANT... I THINK?

I CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER WHO IT WAS FROM.

THAT'S WEIRD, I'VE NEVER FORGOTTEN THAT BEFORE.

SOMEONE SEALED HER MEMORY BEFORE ME.

ドドドド

!? わ わ !?

……?

WHO WAS IT?!

TAKURO !!

WHO...

GO ON.

YOU CAN KISS HIM, IF YOU WANT.

ARE YOU?

I REMEMBER THIS SMELL.

WHO ARE YOU,

WHY ?!

OH,

UH,

GOOD, ERM...

GOOD EVE... NING...

WHY WON'T YOU LOVE ME?!

MISTER?

WHERE AM I? I'M SCARED ...

SO DARK ...

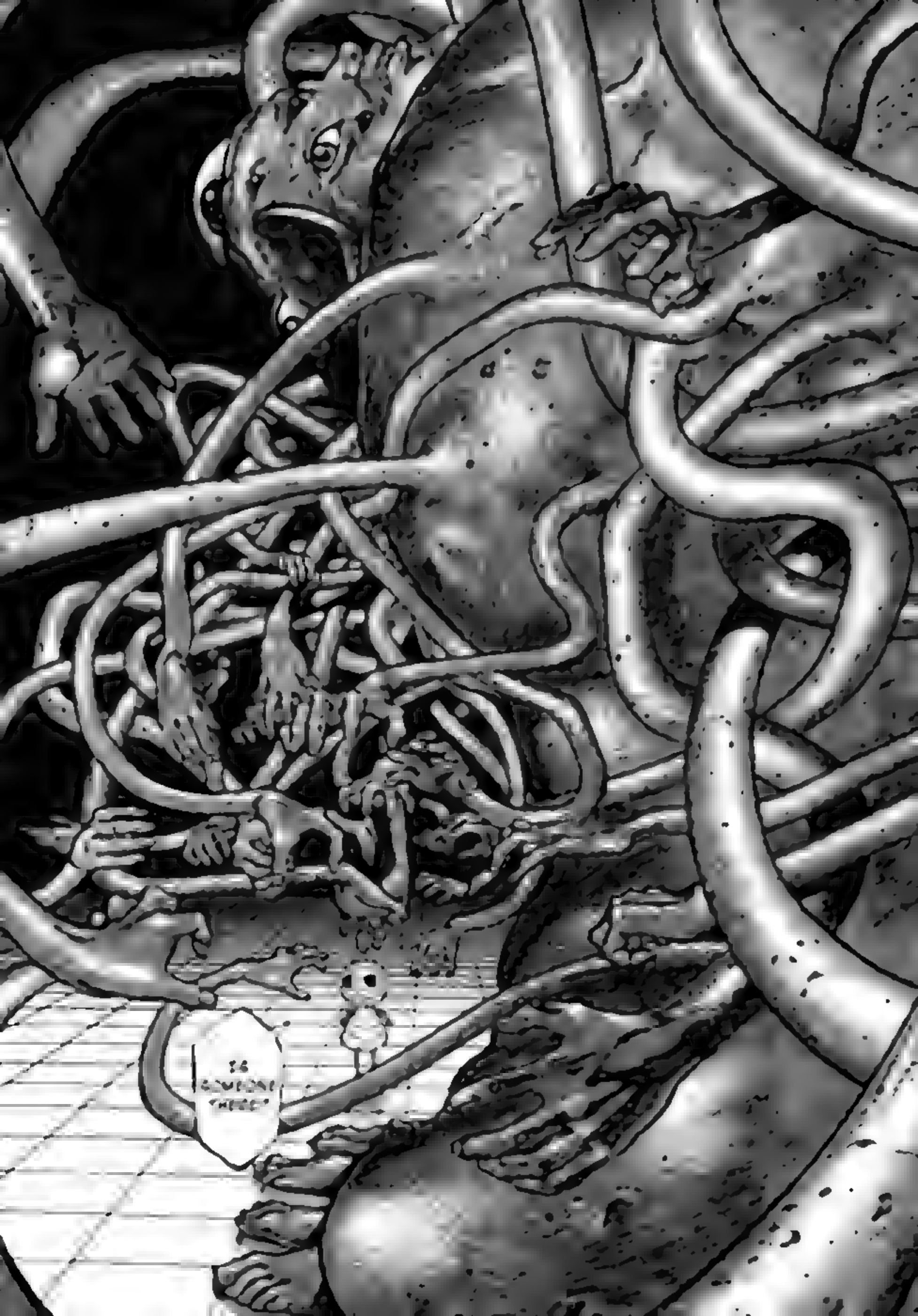
!!

MOON !!!

?

WHERE AM I?

THERE'S NOBODY HERE.



GASP!

FOUND HIM...

まるみ旅館

.....

YEAH ...

はあ はあ

?

はあ

ARE YOU OKAY ?

PHYSI-OLOGICALLY IMPOS-SIBLE?!

WHUH ?

ACK!!

GOD-DAMNIT ...

I'M JUST NOT ALLOWED TO FALL IN LOVE WITH WOMEN, REAL OR ARTIFICIAL !!

WELL, FUCK ME. I GUESS THAT SETTLES IT.

ふら ふら

I'M...

I'M JUST...

HEY, BUDDY.

I HAVEN'T GOTTEN LAID IN OVER SIX MONTHS!!

BUT I ONLY HAVE 10,000 YEN LEFT... NOT EVEN ENOUGH FOR A SUPER-SOAPLAND.

SHIT, MAN...

IF I'D KNOWN THIS WOULD HAPPEN, I'D HAVE SAVED MY MONEY AND GONE TO A WHORE-HOUSE.

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ビチャ

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IT'S LIKE AN OLD-SCHOOL TELEKURA.

I'M CUMMING

WHOAAAAA

WHY DO I ONLY HEAR GUYS MOANING?

OH, AND DO ENJOY YOURSELF.

DOWN THE HALL TO ROOM 6, AND FOLLOW THE MONITOR'S INSTRUCTIONS.

LOOKS LIKE YOU'LL BE A LARGE.

YOU PAY 10,000 FOR AN HOUR'S TIME. SEX, SCAT, ANAL, AND CREAMPIES WILL COST EXTRA

WELL, SIGN ME UP.

(Note: A telekura, or "telephone club," is a place where men pay to go into a booth with a phone, and take calls from women looking for dates, who would most likely then charge the man for sex.)

18

6

UH-OH...

CHAPTER 20: REUNION

.....

2

I SHOULD HAVE FIGURED ...

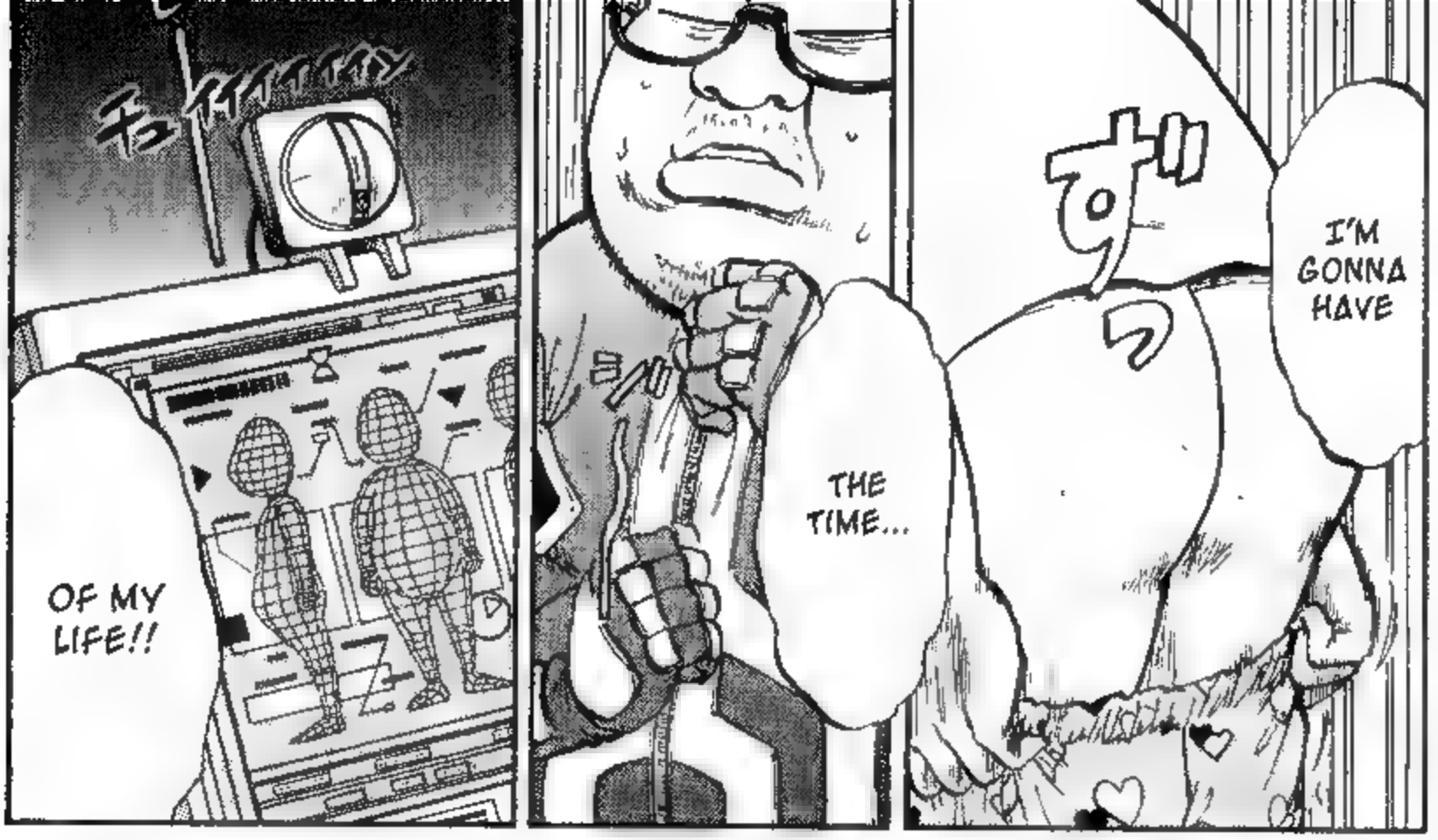
THE STORY OF MY LIFE,

SUMMED UP IN ONE MOMENT.

TO HELL WITH IT, THEN.

THIS WORKS FOR ME!!

YOU DON'T GET TO HAVE SEX WITH A REAL WOMAN FOR 10,000 YEN.


OF MY LIFE!!
THE TIME...
I'M GONNA HAVE

4
YOU KNOW, THIS LOOKS KINDA COOL...

カニカニ

CAREFUL, CAREFUL

DON'T WANT TO PINCH ANY-THING...

UH, I GUESS...

Sterilized

THIS GOES ON MY CROTCH.

カチ カチ カチ

UHH, I'LL LEAVE MY FACE AS IS. NEXT...

WHOA!

YOU CAN CHOOSE YOUR DICK SIZE?! WHAT DOES THAT MEAN, "TANUKI"?

LARGE SIZE, CIRCUM-SIZED. YEP, THAT'S ME!!

カチャ カチャ

13cm

HERE WE GO!!

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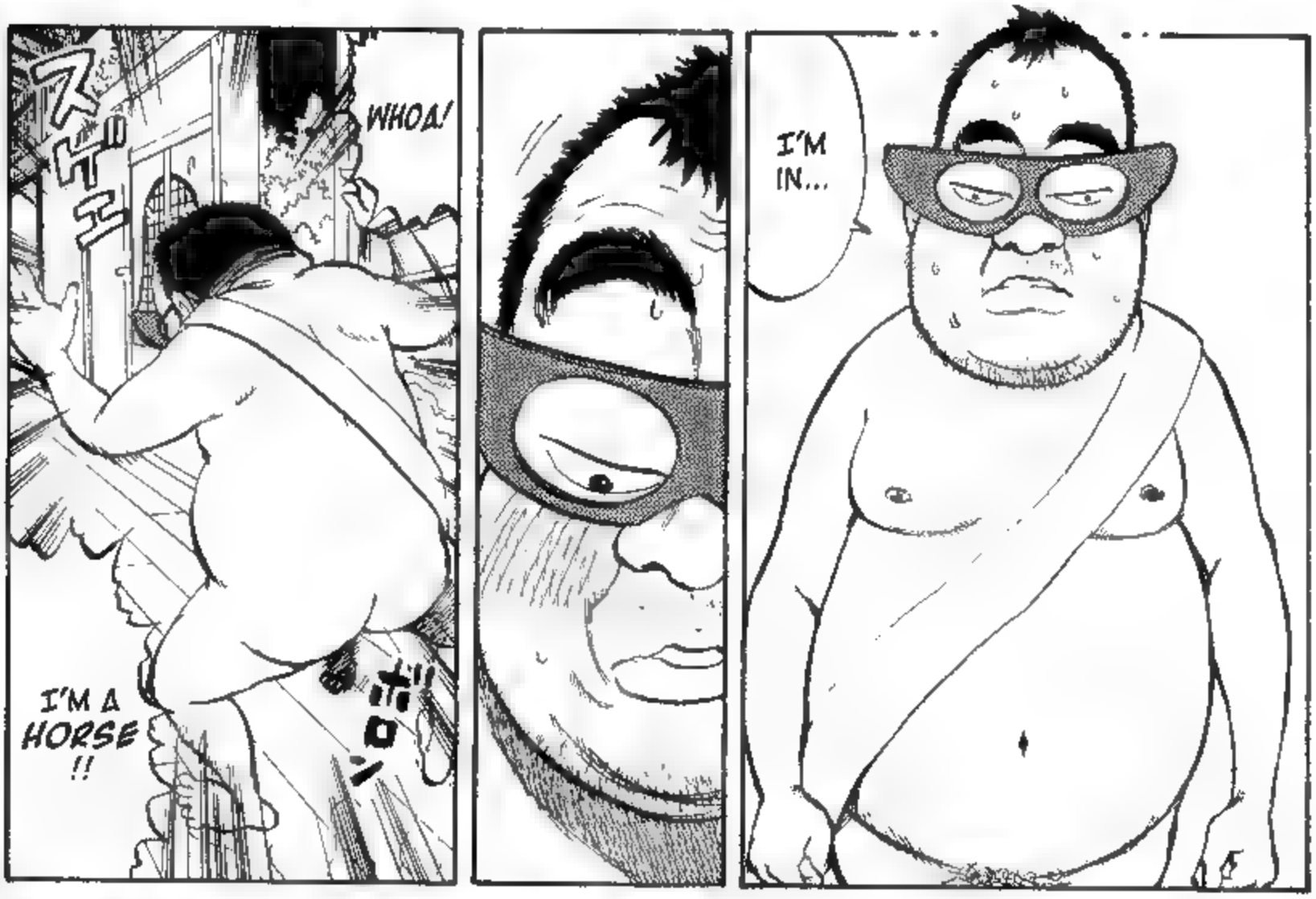
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WHOA!
I'M A HORSE !!
I'M IN...

JUST PICK ANY GIRL YOU WANT FROM THE ROOM.
THIS IS A SLOW TIME OF DAY, SO YOU'VE GOT A GREAT SELECTION.
RIGHT THIS WAY, SIR.
UH, YES MA' AM!
おおお
CUT AND EVERY-THING...
HOW BIG WILL THIS THING GET WHEN HARD?

T-THEY'RE SO CUTE.. REGULAR SUPER-SOAPS HAVE NOTHING ON THESE GIRLS. HELL, THEY'RE CUTER THAN MOST IDOLS!

HAVE YOU MADE UP YOUR MIND?

HUH?

ヂラ

OLD WOMAN, I'LL TAKE HER, TODAY.

YUZUKI? VERY GOOD, SIR.

I FEEL SO SHY HERE

COMING!

THAT ONE, PLEASE!!

TH-

I NEED TO CHOOSE QUICKLY...

WHICH ONE'S MY TYPE...? I CAN'T CHOOSE!

THEY'RE ALL SO CUTE!!

I'M GOING TO PICK ONE OF THEM,

AND IN A FEW MINUTES, WE'LL BE HAVING S-SEX...

MIKAZUKI? VERY GOOD, SIR.

2

THIS IS THE ROOM.

UMM,

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I WASN'T EVEN LOOKING AT HER FACE...

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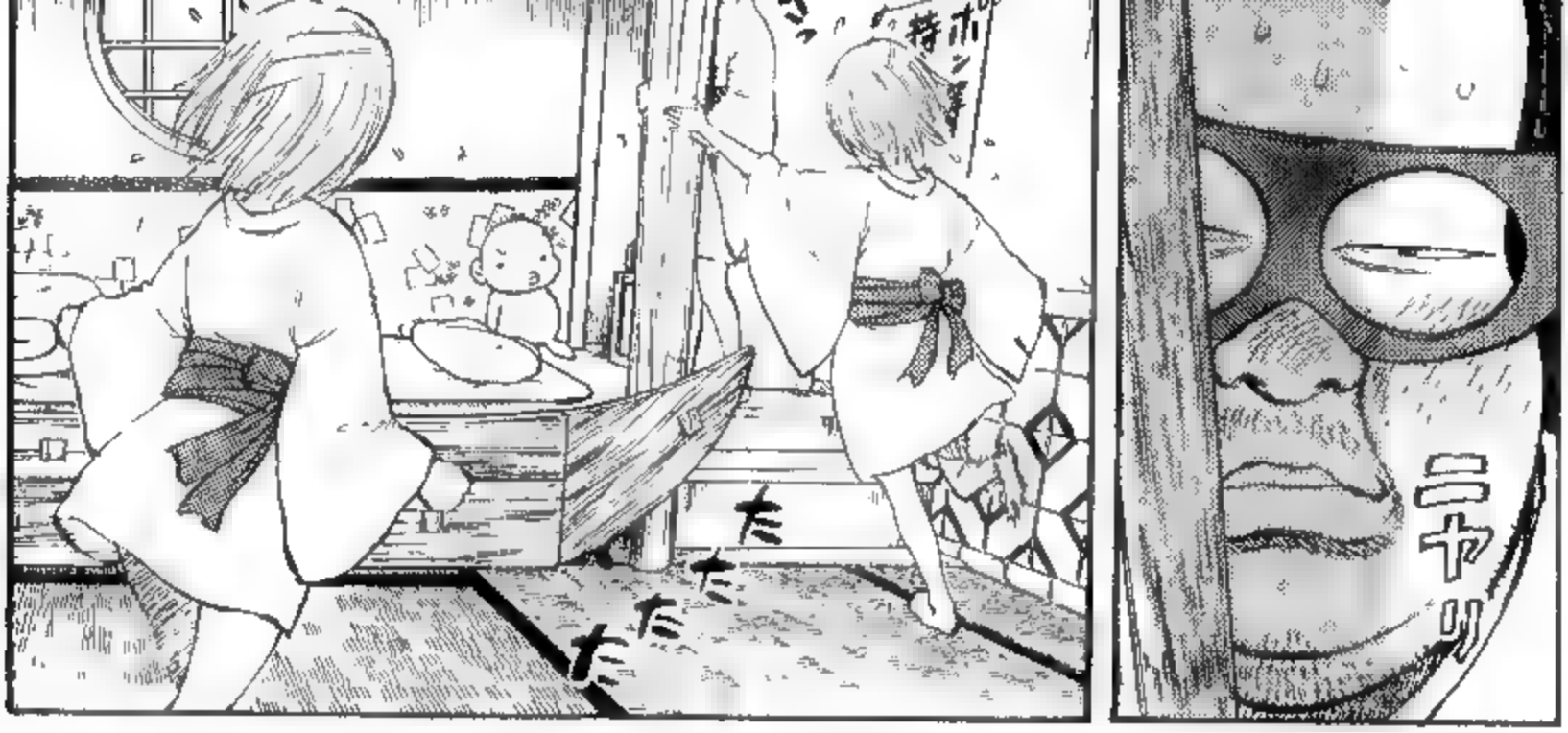
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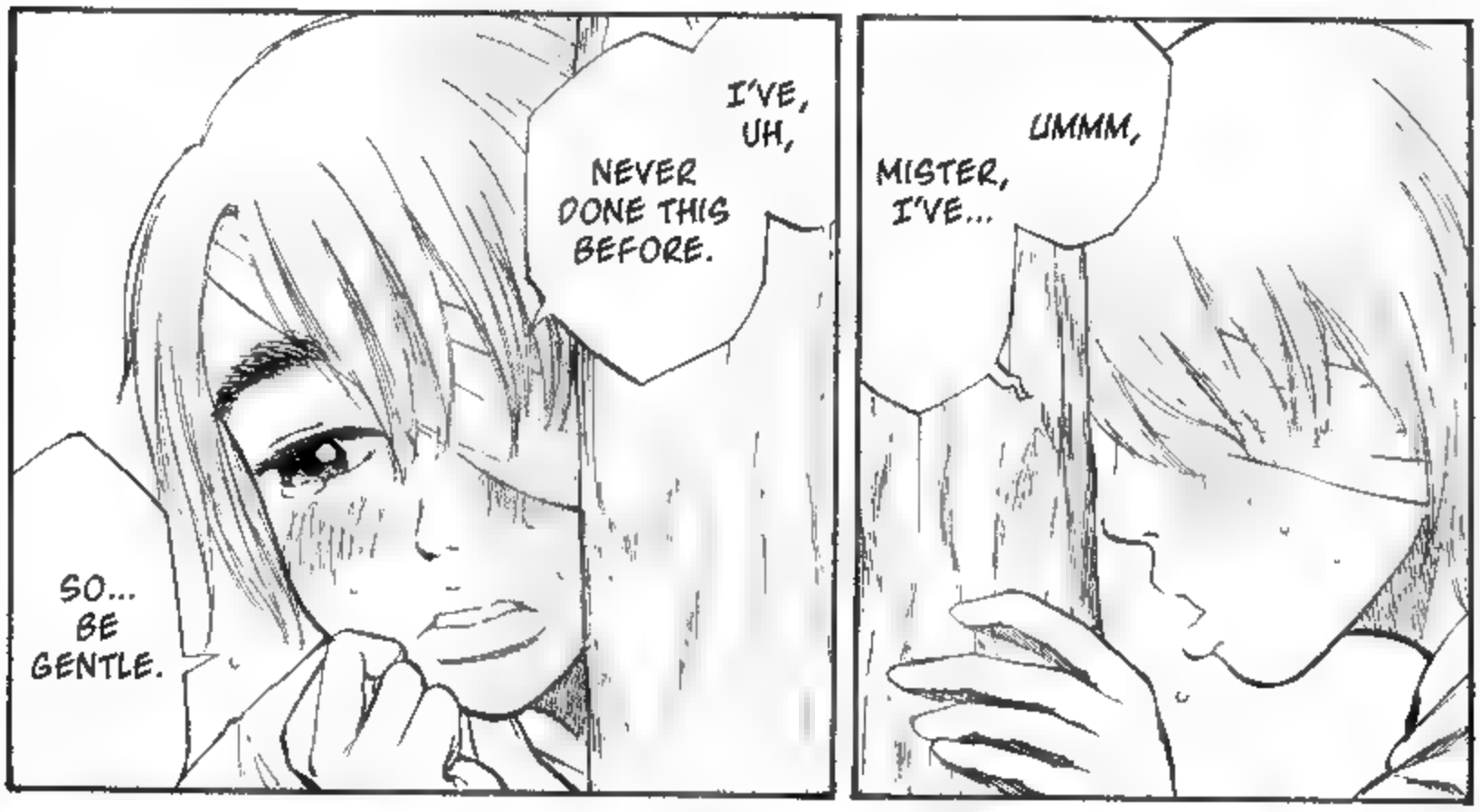
I'VE, UH, NEVER DONE THIS BEFORE.
SO... BE GENTLE.
UMMM, MISTER, I'VE...

PLEASE...

TS-

ビクッ

TSUKIKO?!

AH!

W-WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!

IT'S NOT A TANUKI?

I...

I'M NOT TSUKIKO. MY NAME IS MIKAZUKI.

HE HAS A MUSHROOM INSTEAD.

M-MIKAZUKI?

NO, NO!

YOUR NAME

IS TSUKIKO !!!

WHO ARE YOU,

MISTER?

WHICH ROOM?
OH!
COME QUICK, YOH! MIKAZUKI'S BEING KIDNAPPED!
YOH, ARE YOU UP THERE?
THERE'S ANOTHER CUSTOMER GOING WILD!

I'M TELLING YOU, SHE BELONGS TO ME!
I'M GOING TO TAKE HER BACK HOME!!

PSHH.

STUPID DRUNK...

BUY HER?!

TO HELL WITH THAT! I DON'T HAVE ANOTHER YEN!

TAKE HER HOME?

I'M SORRY, SIR, SHE'S STORE MERCHANDISE. IF YOU WANT HER, YOU HAVE TO BUY HER FROM US.

HIM AGAIN.

K-KANZAKI!!

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO HURT TSUKIKO, AREN'T YOU?!

I'M ALLOWED TO HURT CUSTOMERS IF THEY STEAL THE GIRLS, RIGHT?

HMPH. WE'LL BE OUT OF BUSINESS IF THE REAL LIFE EMPLOYEES TRY TO HURT HIM. GET HIM OUT OF HERE.

TSUKIKO...? IS HE THE FORMER OWNER?

WHAT IF I SAID YES?

YOU ?!

I'M
GONNA SOCK

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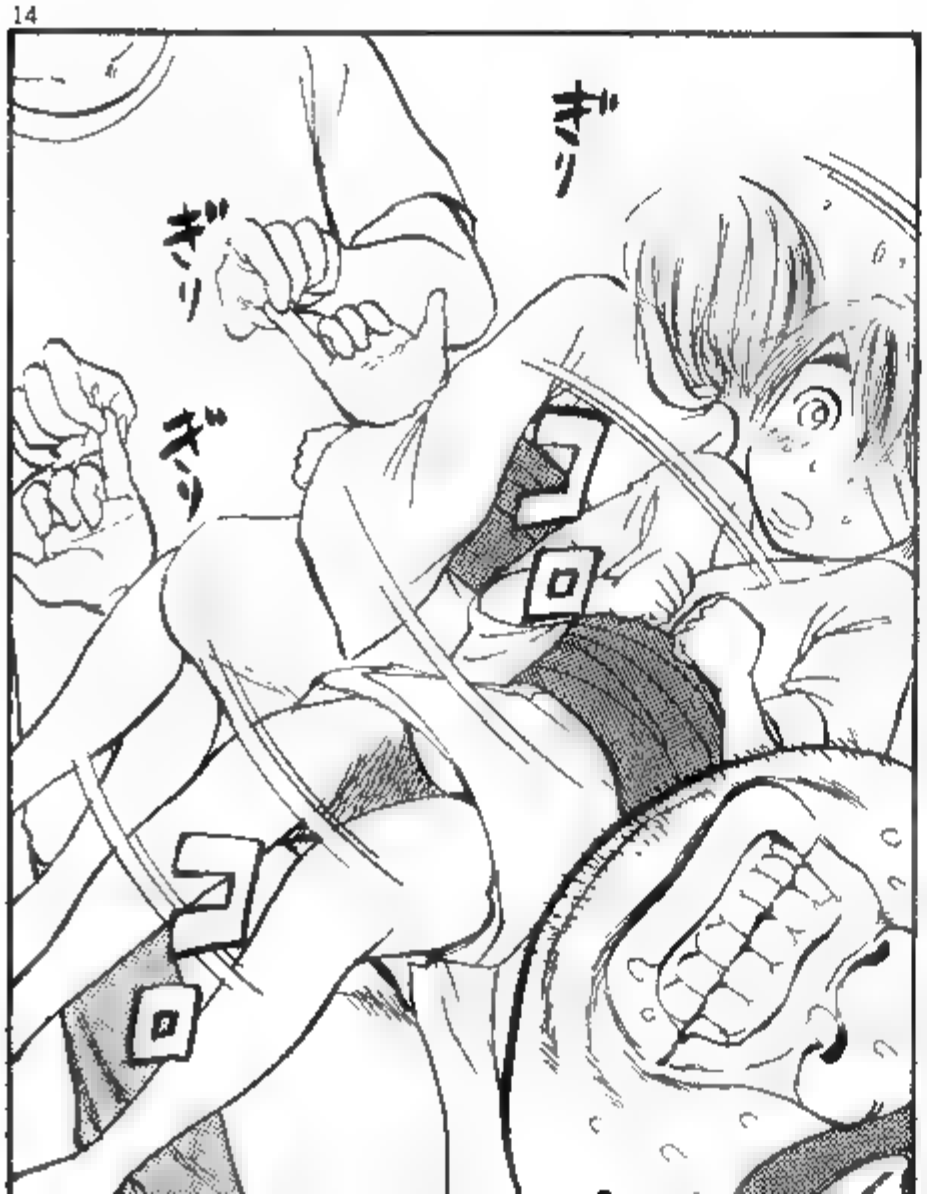
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YEOW!
YEOWIE OWIE, MY PINKIES !!!

DAMMIT, DON'T YOU TOUCH TSUKIKO !!

EEEEK!!

ピク

ピク

……

ぎしっ

FNNGGG HHH... SHARTT.

FHH,

.6

MY TSUKIKO-OOOO!

MUH,

よろよろ

GIVE ME BACK,

GI-

WHY ARE YOU SO FIXATED ON HER?

NO, IT WAS HARD ENOUGH...

WAS THAT TOO SOFT?

ぶら ぶら

TSUKIKO IS THE ONLY THING LEFT IN MY LIFE!!!

はあ はあ

I-

I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING LEFT...

I AIN'T GIVIN' UP ON ANYTHING! I JUST WANT A FRICKIN' GIRL-FRIEND !!!

YOU DON'T WANT TO GIVE UP ON REALITY.

FORGET ABOUT IT.

SORRY.

MOON IS MINE.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH THIS GUY?

TOSS HIM OUT AT THE ENTRANCE.

Ha Ha Ha

[Sign: No Trespassing]

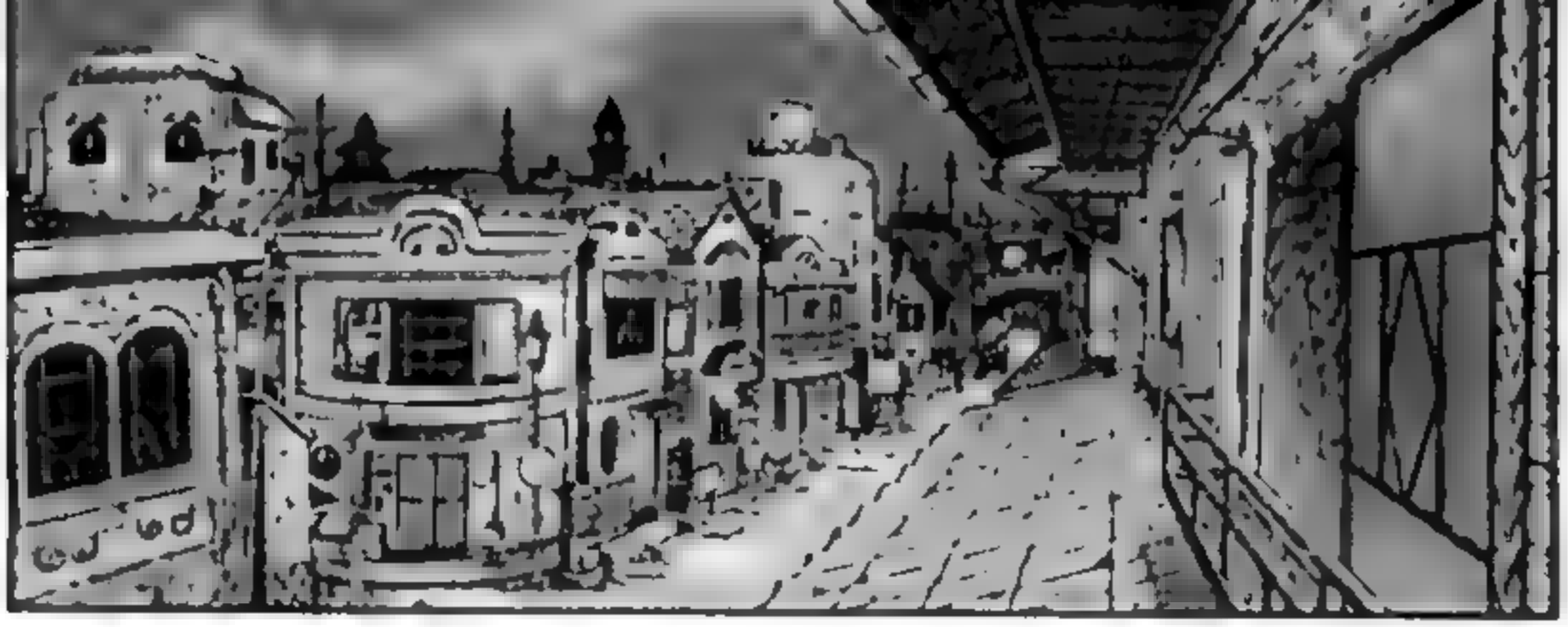
GROSS, THAT GUY'S NAKED.

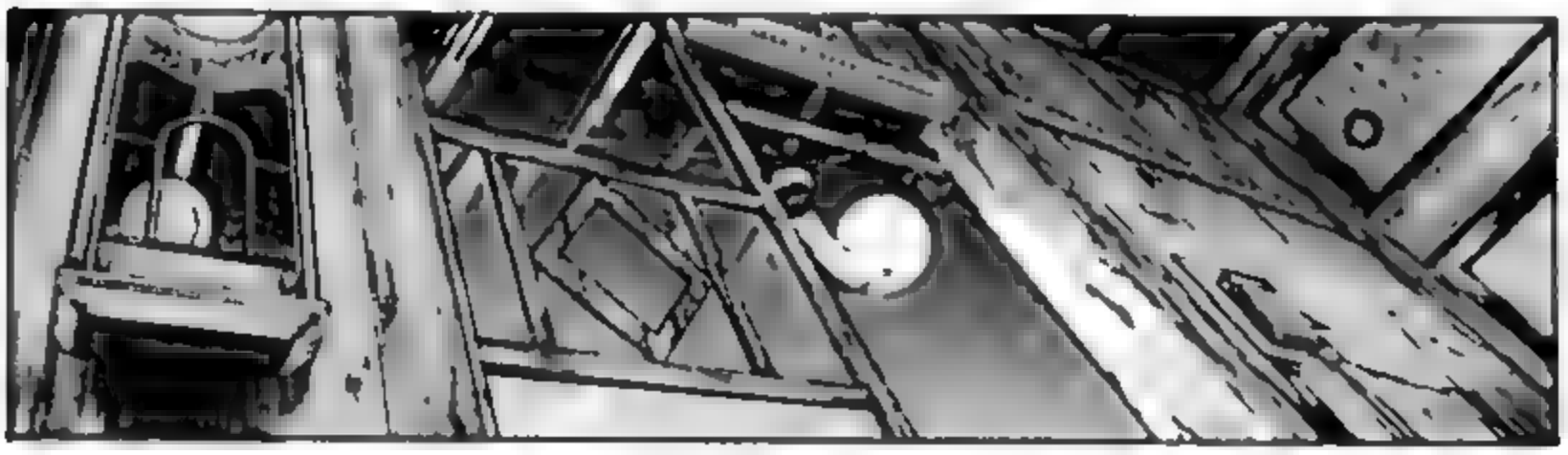
IS HE DEAD?

LOOK AT HIS DICK!

EEEK, HE'S LIKE A LITTLE BABY!

CHAPTER 21: EXIT





MIYABI!!
!?

MIYABI, WAKE UP
NO, YOU, NOT THERE
THAT'S THE WRONG HOLE!

WHU-
WHAT, WHAT, WHAT?!
I NEED TO PEE

S-

SORRY, MIYABI! I'M SCARED ON MY OWN.

GEEZ,

CAN'T YOU GO TO TAKE A PEE ON YOUR OWN?

R-RIGHT.

LOOK, YOU HAVEN'T PULLED IN ANY CUSTOMERS SINCE YOU GOT HERE. YOU CAN'T MAKE IT HERE WITHOUT SUPPORTING YOURSELF.

YOU'RE SO NICE TO COME WITH ME.

SHUT UP!

トタトタ

3

MIYABIIII...

I'M RIGHT HERE! MAKE IT QUICK.

ARE YOU STILL THERE?

.....

YOH BELONGS TO M...

TO EVERY-ONE HERE

YOU SHOULDN'T GET THE WRONG IDEA.

YOU KNOW,

ABOUT WHAT?

MIKAZUKI

WHAT?

HURRY UP, OR I'M GOING BACK TO SLEEP!

W-WAIT! I'M ALMOST DONE!

BLAH.

SHEESH!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SO SCA...

OH!

HUH?

AHH, MUCH BETTER.

ALL DONE, MIYABI.

HERRRK!

!!

WHAT HAPPENED TO MIYABI ?!

I WAS, UH, JUST TRYING TO SCARE HER. THINK I KNOCKED HER OUT...

5

HEY, MIYABI? HELLO?

YOH!!

HEY.

THINGS HAVE BEEN ALL WEIRD SINCE I GOT HERE.

LIKE THAT GUY WHO CAME AND CALLED ME "TSUKIKO."

I TRY TO REMEMBER WHAT IT WAS LIKE BEFORE I WAS HERE,

BUT ALL I CAN REMEMBER IS THESE RANDOM IMAGES...

PALM TREES, A LITTLE HOUSE, SOMEONE WHO WAS NICE TO ME... THE REST IS A BLUR

NO, YOH!

STOP PUTTING IT IN THERE

DO YOU REMEMBER THE PAST, YOH?

I REMEMBER ALL ABOUT THE PAST.

I EVEN KNOW ABOUT YOURS.

REALLY?!

TELL ME, TELL ME!

YOUR NAME ISN'T MIKAZUKI.

NOR IS IT TSUKIKO.

MAYBE THAT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE TO YOU, COMING OUT OF THE BLUE

Y-YEAH.

YOU OKAY?

?

?

?

HOW-EVER,

I CAN BRING BACK YOUR MEMORY AS TSUKIKO.

YOU WANT THAT?

I WISH I COULD REVERT YOU TO YOUR ORIGINAL SELF, BUT I CAN'T.

HMM, WELL...

YOU MIGHT NOT LIKE ME ANYMORE.

WHAT HAP-PENS,

IF I GO BACK?

.....

U-UMM,

THEN,

NO!

I WANT YOU...

TO BE MY VERY FIRST.

I LIKE YOU, YUKI!

I CAN DO A BETTER JOB AT THIS WORK.

MAYBE THEN.

I'VE WANTED TO DO IT, TOO.

ぎゅ

PHILAN-DERER!

SHUT UP!

...WHAT?

YOH, YOU PHILAN-DERER!

TO ME,

YOU'RE THE EXIT TO A DIFFERENT WORLD.

LONG, LONG AGO,

EXIT?

YOU'RE TALKING IN RIDDLES AGAIN.

トン!

トン!

I DID THE EXACT SAME THING,

TO REACH THIS WORLD.

ガシッ

ガシッ

IT WAS THE ENTRANCE TO THE REALM I LIVE IN NOW.

はあ
はあ
はあ
OH, YOH...
WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOU WHEN WE DO THIS?
NO, DON'T!
REALITY ?
はあ
はあ
はあ
I'LL GO BACK TO REALITY.
はあ
はあ
はあ

NNG!
YOH, I WANT...
I WANT TO GO WITH YOU.
IT'S DIRTY.
MMM.
AH!
I JUST PEED OUT OF THERE.

はあ
はあ
はあ
はあ
はあ

TAKE ME

WITH YOU!

KNOCK!

YOU WERE BEAUTIFUL TONIGHT,
HUH? WHERE
YEAH, I'M ALL

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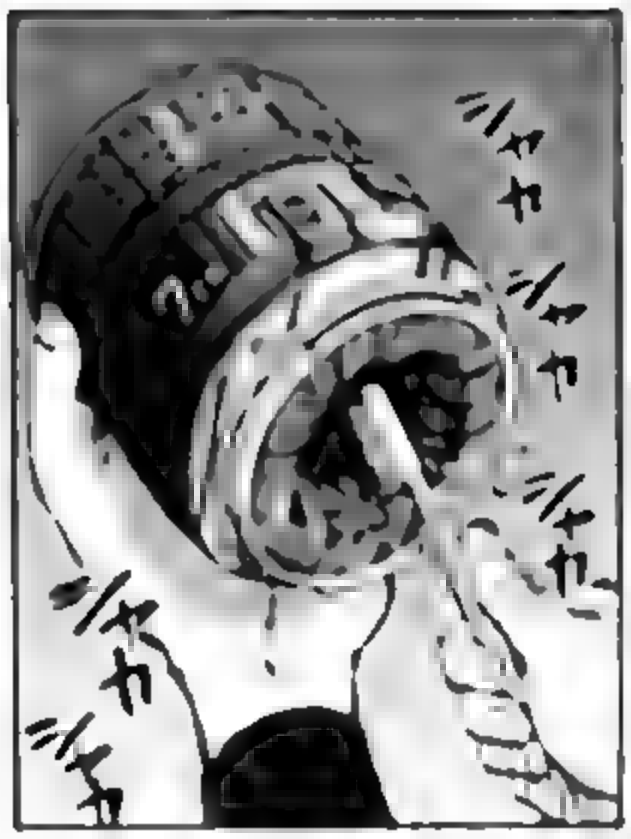
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ﾊｯ!!
ﾊｯ!!

ANOTHER
GREAT
NIGHT
OF

HANG ON. SIT DOWN, THEN TELL ME EVERY-THING.

I FOUND TSUKIKO...

I,

SORRY, YOU WERE PROBABLY SLEEPING.

NOT YET...

TAKURO !!

.7

I TOLD YOU, IT WAS KANZAKI WHO DID IT!

WHOA, HOW'D YOU GET THAT BRUISE?!

YOU WERE WEARING A BODYSUIT? WHERE?

WH-

WHO CARES WHERE ?!

WHAT?

HE KICKED ME IN THE FREAKIN' BALLS, MAN! I COULD HAVE DIED!

YOU DON'T BRUISE LIKE THAT FROM A BODYSUIT, THOUGH. HE MAY BE STUPID, BUT HE WOULDN'T LIE ABOUT THAT.

T- TURNS OUT TSUKIKO ...

WAS TRICKED BY KANZAKI INTO WORKING AS A PROSTITUTE!

AT A BROTHEL, THEN.

I-I DON'T HAVE ANY MORE MONEY!

THE ONLY WAY TO GET A GIRL BACK FROM THE ADULT INDUSTRY IS TO PAY.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO, TAKURO?

COULD IT HAVE BEEN THE REAL KANZAKI, THEN?

I-I'LL STEAL TSUKIKO BACK!!

SHE'S THE ONLY THING I HAVE LEFT IN MY LIFE!!

THE PLAN GOES INTO MOTION FRIDAY!!

HEH

ECHIGO !!

OOOH, YEAH, BABY!

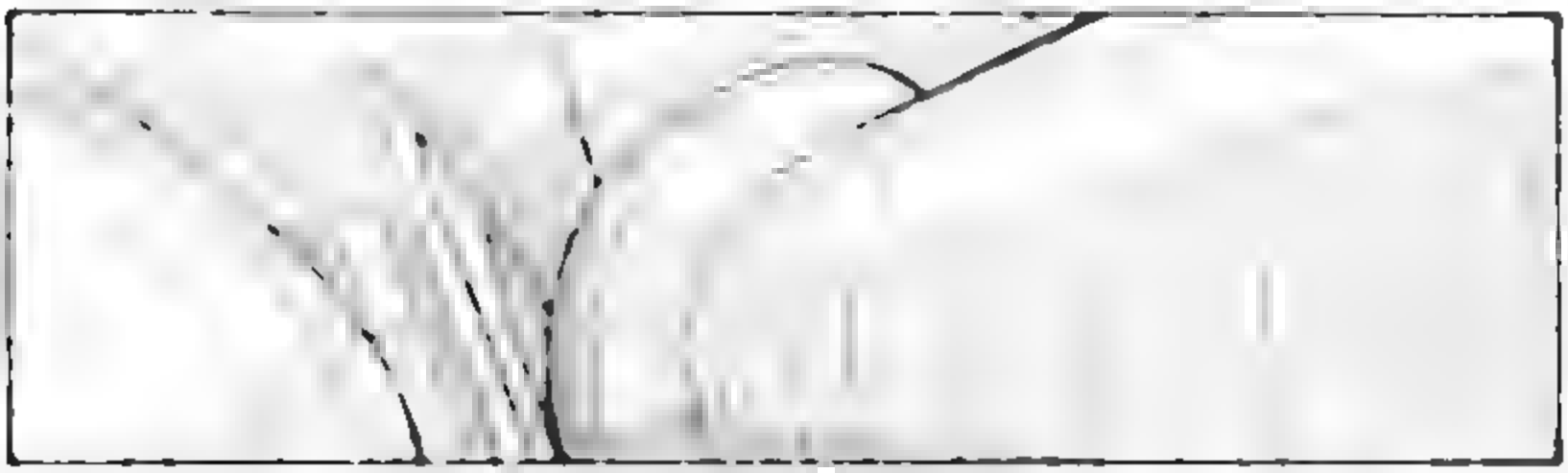
RIGHT HERE? YOU LIKE IT HERE?

I GOT IT.

STOP POINTIN' THAT UGLY MUG AT ME.

I'LL HELP YOU GET TSUKIKO BACK.

CHAPTER 22: LOSER



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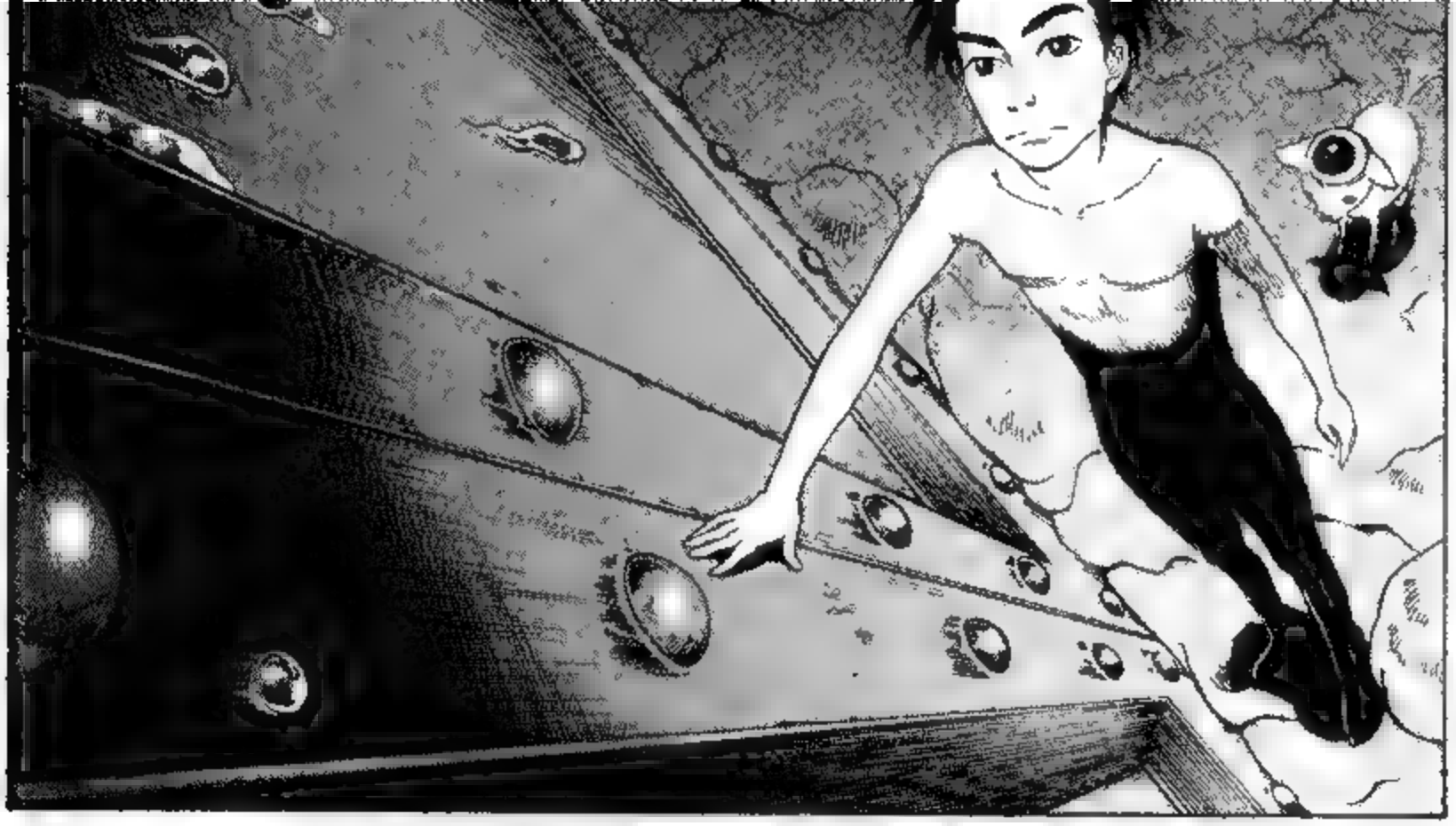
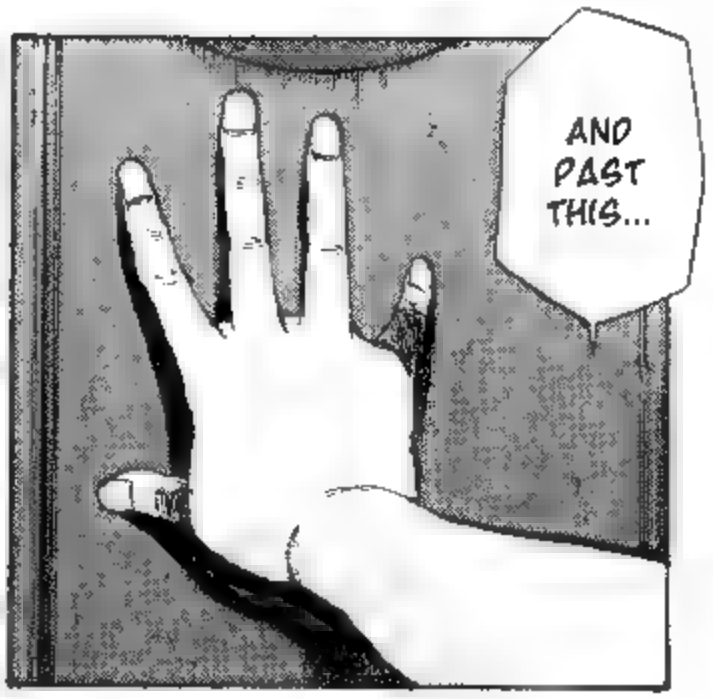


...IS REALITY.


AND PAST THIS...

SHUT UP...
NOAH...
YOU CAN'T GO BACK TO REAL LIFE.

YOU CAN'T PASS THROUGH THIS GATE.

I'M THE GUARD HERE. FINALLY SEE ANOTHER PERSON, AND IT'S YOU.

NO, I'M NOT NOAH.

TECHNICALLY JUST A COMPRESSED COPY OF NOAH. AND SIGNIFICANTLY DEGRADED.

I WANT THINGS TO END.

I'M TIRED OF LIVING.

WHAT WAS THAT FOR?

THAT WAS ADVICE, FOR YOUR OWN SAKE.

SHUT UP!!

YIP!!

I CAME INTO THIS WORLD BECAUSE YOU LURED ME HERE.

REALITY AND ARTIFICIAL REALITY WERE THE SAME TO ME. I WAS SEEKING SOMETHING GREATER; SOMETHING PURER.

WHAT HERE ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU? YOU HAVE WOMEN AND POPULARITY, AND ETERNAL FREEDOM FROM SICKNESS AND ILL HEALTH.

YOU CAN HAVE MONEY AND POWER INSTANTLY, SHOULD YOU WANT THEM... IT'S A WONDERFUL WORLD.

WHAT I WANTED ...

WAS "SALVATION."

IT'S ALL SHIT.

HMPH.

I HAD ALL THOSE THINGS,

BACK IN THE REAL WORLD ALREADY.

LISTEN UP, KANZAKI I WON'T EXPLAIN IT TWICE

THIS "SALVATION" YOU SOUGHT

YOU SAY? HOO HOO!

YOU HAD EVERYTHING YOU WANTED,

GWAHA HA HA HA!

HEEEEE HEE HEE!

OF SUFFERING IN REAL LIFE,

WAS TO TAKE YOUR TERRIBLE MEMORIES

AND OVERWRITE THEM WITH NEW MEMORIES,

BRIGHT AND HAPPY ONES FOR A HAPPIER WORLD.

SO ALL THESE MEMORIES I HAVE NOW ARE FALSE?

THAT'S PREPOS-TEROUS.

YOU'VE GOT A GOOD SENSE OF HUMOR.

なでて

なでて

HEE HEE. THANKS.

WHAT'S SO FUNNY?

SORRY, SORRY.

フフ

I STILL REMEMBER EVERY DETAIL.

THAT IS A FALSE MEMORY CREATED BECAUSE YOU WANTED THAT TO BE YOUR PAST.

NO, YOU DON'T.

IN 7TH GRADE, IN A THREE-SOME WITH TWO 8TH GRADERS

THAT'S A LIE. I KNOW WHEN I LOST MY VIRGINITY?

BUT TRUE. YOU WEREN'T POPULAR WITH WOMEN IN REAL LIFE.

YOU WEREN'T EVEN GIVEN THE TIME OF DAY.

YOU HAVEN'T ATTENDED SCHOOL SINCE THE DAY THE PILES OF DANDRUFF ON YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOL UNIFORM EARNED YOU THE NICKNAME "CHRISTMAS TREE."

EVER SINCE THE SUMMER OF 5TH GRADE, WHEN YOUR VACATION HOMEWORK WAS MADE FUN OF IN FRONT OF THE CLASS, YOU REFUSED TO GO TO SCHOOL.

MONEY? POWER? WHAT ARE THOSE?

YOU WERE NEVER POPULAR.

HOW DID YOU GET THOSE WITHOUT A JOB?

THAT'S A LIE...

YOU TOOK EVERY MIRROR IN THE HOUSE,

IN ORDER TO BANISH YOUR HIDEOUS VISAGE,

AND BROKE IT.

YOU GREW BLOATED, GREASY, PIMPLY.

YOU GREW YOUR FLAKY HAIR OVER YOUR FACE TO HIDE IT.

YOU LIVED OFF INSTANT FOOD AND PACKAGED SNACKS.

ALL THAT WAS LEFT WAS A STALE, PETTY HATRED FOR THE REST OF THE WORLD.

KILLKILLKILL
KILLKILLKILL
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KILLKILLKILL

YOU WITHDREW FROM THE WORLD, AND YOU AVERTED YOUR EYES FROM YOURSELF.

HE WOULD NEED TO ALTER HIS MEMORIES,

AND CHANGE HIS PERSONALITY AS WELL.

THIS TWISTED CHARAC-TER

WOULD NOT BE SATISFIED MERELY WITH HIS IDEAL FORM.

THAT IS WHAT THIS WORLD

WAS CREATED TO DO.

I'M A MEMBER OF THE ELITE. BETTER THAN THE REST.

I JUST LOST MY WAY FROM REALITY.

I...

I'M...

I'M ME.

IT'S A LIE!

SO I COULD SURPASS REALITY.

I CREATED THIS WORLD

IS A TALL TALE.

AND THAT...

IT SAYS A LOT ABOUT WHAT KIND OF PERSON YOU REALLY ARE.

IT'S SHALLOW AND SILLY

THE PERSON YOU ARE NOW WAS CONSTRUCTED BECAUSE

THAT'S WHO YOU WANT TO BE! OFFF!

AND BEST OF ALL,

YOU'RE EXACTLY THE SAME AS ALL THOSE PEOPLE YOU DESPISE SO MUCH, THE ONES WHO COME TO THIS WORLD TO ESCAPE REALITY.

EVEN WORSE, IN FACT.

A TRUE LOSER.
YOU COMPLETELY DENY EVERYTHING THAT YOU ARE.

!!

HYA HA HA HA! SO FRAIL...

YOUR IDENTITY HAS ALREADY BEGUN TO COLLAPSE.

NOW, BEFORE YOU COMPLETELY DISINTE-GRATE;

RETURN TO NOAH, KANZAKI!

16

NOAH IS MERCIFUL.

EEK!

NOAH WILL SAVE YOU.

...!!!

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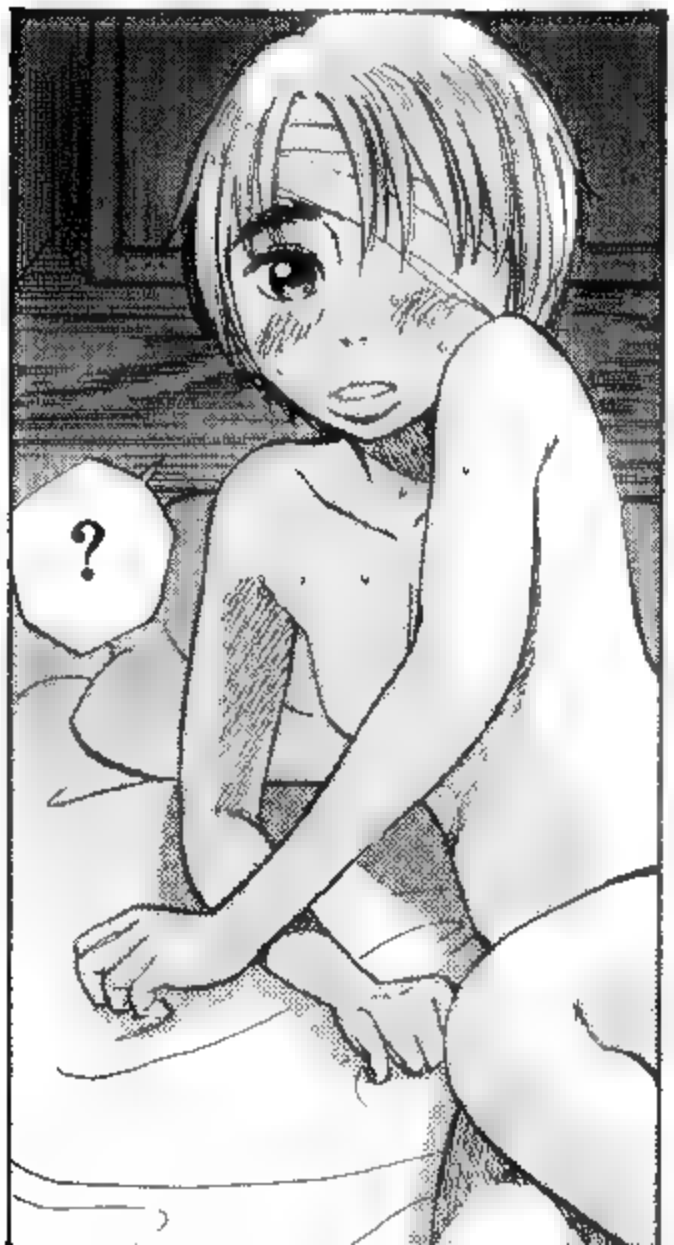
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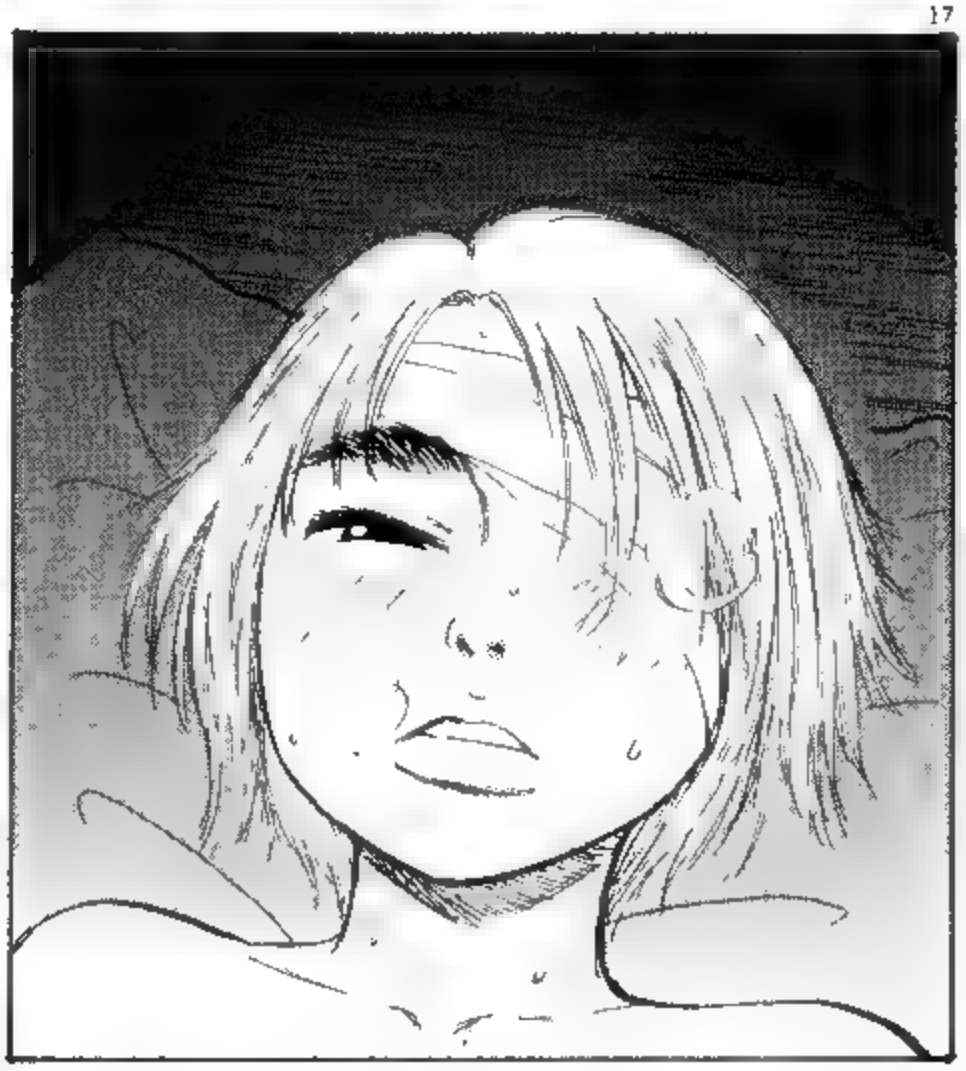


ARE YOU OKAY?

STAY AWAY.

WH-

WHAT'S WRONG, YOH?

I-

I'M FINE.

I'M JUST FINE!

I'M FINE...

THIS AGAIN?

Ressentiment Setting Materials 2

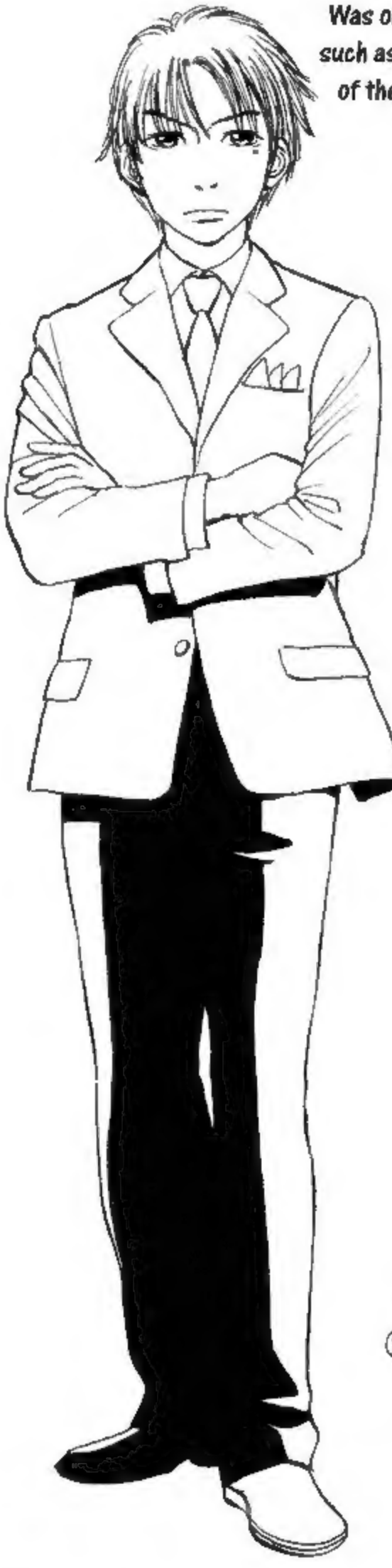
THIS AGAIN.

Reinhart Wolfgang Schnaufer

An Unreal Online resident since early beta tests. Was once a very prominent figure, having several titles such as member of the Astonia Council, and guildmaster of the girl-game guild, but retired abruptly from these positions in late 2014 and is now reclusive. Has lived through two Unreal World Wars and is wary of the leader of the Ninth Empire. Currently living with five women.

Daisaku Echigo

Was unfairly targeted and fired from his job at a bread factory in late 2014 after a small fire broke out. Said Echigo, "I really SHOULD have burned that place down." Currently unemployed, and living off of savings and dried bread taken from the factory before his termination. Seriously considering the idea that real life is a nightmare from which he will soon awake. Age 30. Total virgin.



Maki

His latest NPC.
The current trend in girl gaming is "realistic" characters, which involve complex emotional formulas that are difficult to fully conquer.
Of course, it is set in stone that they love the player, so there is no danger of actually being spurned.

Matilda

His second NPC. One of the most popular characters sold for the little sister role. She can be modified in options to include identifying marks with her brother (in this case, a mole).
Her dream is to be her big brother's wife. Virgin. On a side note, Echigo lost his real little sister to a car accident when he was still very young.

Karen

Reinhart's very first NPC.
Sold in the very early days of the "Noah's Ark" line, she commands a hefty price on the market these days.
Originally designed as an RPG partner, she has few emotional fluxuations and is generally subservient.
She took Echigo's Unreal virginity.